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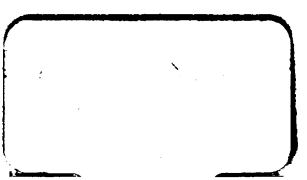

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=
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Eldest Daughter of Sir Walter Scott.

LIFE

OF

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VOL. VI.

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1818–1819.

I HAVE now to introduce a melancholy subject—one of the greatest afflictions that ever Scott encountered.

The health of Charles Duke of Buccleuch was by this time beginning to give way, and Scott thought it his duty to intimate his very serious apprehensions to his noble friend's brother.

"*To the Right Hon. Lord Montagu, Ditton Park, Windsor.*

"Edinburgh, 12th Nov. 1818.

"My Dear Lord,

"I am about to write to you with feelings of the deepest anxiety. I have hesitated for two or three days whether I should communicate to your Lordship the sincere alarm which I entertain on account of the Duke's present state of health, but I have come to persuade myself, that it will be discharging a part of the duty which I owe to him, to mention my own most distressing apprehensions. I was at the cattle-show on the 6th, and executed the delegated task of toastmaster, and so forth. I was told by * * * * that the Duke is under the influence of the muriatic bath, which occasions a good deal of uneasiness when the medicine is in possession of the system. The Duke observed the strictest diet, and remained only a short time at table, leaving me to do the honours, which I did with a sorrowful heart, endeavouring, however, to persuade myself that * * * *'s account, and the natural depression of spirits incidental to his finding himself unable for the time to discharge the

duty to his guests, which no man could do with so much grace and kindness, were sufficient to account for the alteration of his manner and appearance. I spent Monday with him quietly and alone, and I must say that all I saw and heard was calculated to give me the greatest pain. His strength is much less, his spirits lower, and his general appearance far more unfavourable than when I left him at Drumlanrig a few weeks before. What * * * *, and, indeed, what the Duke himself says of the medicine, may be true—but * * * * is very sanguine, and, like all the personal physicians attached to a person of such consequence, he is too much addicted to the *placebo*—at least I think so—too apt to fear to give offence by contradiction, or by telling that sort of truth which may contravert the wishes or habits of his patient. I feel I am communicating much pain to your Lordship, but I am sure that, excepting yourself, there is not a man in the world whose sorrow and apprehension could exceed mine in having such a task to discharge; for, as your Lordship well knows, the ties which bind me to your excellent brother are of a much stronger kind than usually connect persons so different in rank. But the alteration in voice and person, in features, and in spirits, all argue the decay of natural strength, and the increase of some internal disorder, which is gradually triumphing over the system. Much has been done in these cases by change of climate. I hinted this to the Duke at

Drumlanrig, but I found his mind totally averse to it. But he made some enquiries at Harden (just returned from Italy), which seemed to imply that at least the idea of a winter in Italy or the south of France was not altogether out of his consideration. Your Lordship will consider whether he can or ought to be pressed upon this point. He is partial to Scotland, and feels the many high duties which bind him to it. But the air of this country, with its alternations of moisture and dry frost, although excellent for a healthy person, is very trying to a valetudinarian.

"I should not have thought of volunteering to communicate such unpleasant news, but that the family do not seem alarmed. I am not surprised at this, because, where the decay of health is very gradual, it is more easily traced by a friend who sees the patient from interval to interval, than by the affectionate eyes which are daily beholding him.

"Adieu, my dear Lord. God knows you will scarce read this letter with more pain than I feel in writing it. But it seems indispensable to me to communicate my sentiments of the Duke's present situation to his nearest relation and dearest friend. His life is invaluable to his country and to his family, and how dear it is to his friends can only be estimated by those who know the soundness of his understanding, the uprightness and truth of his judgment, and the

generosity and warmth of his feelings. I am always, my dear Lord, most truly yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

Scott's letters of this and the two following months are very much occupied with the painful subject of the Duke of Buccleuch's health; but those addressed to his Grace himself are, in general, in a more jocose strain than usual. His friend's spirits were sinking, and he exerted himself in this way, in the hope of amusing the hours of langour at Bowhill. These letters are headed "Edinburgh Gazette Extraordinary," No. 1, No. 2, and so on; but they deal so much in laughable gossip about persons still living, that I find it difficult to make any extracts from them. The following paragraphs, however, from the Gazette of November the 20th, give a little information as to his own minor literary labours:—

"The article on Gourgaud's Narrative* *is* by a certain *Vieux Routier* of your Grace's acquaintance, who would willingly have some military hints from you for the continuation of the article, if at any time you should feel disposed to amuse yourself with looking at the General's most marvellous performance. His lies are certainly like the father who begot them. Do not think that at any time the little trumpery

* Article on General Gourgaud's Memoirs in Blackwood's Magazine for November 1818.

intelligence this place affords can interrupt my labours, while it amuses your Grace. I can scribble as fast in the Court of Session as anywhere else, without the least loss of time or hinderance of business. At the same time, I cannot help laughing at the miscellaneous trash I have been putting out of my hand, and the various motives which made me undertake the jobs. An article for the Edinburgh Review*—this for the love of Jeffrey, the editor—the first for ten years. Do., being the article *Drama* for the Encyclopedia—this for the sake of Mr Constable, the publisher. Do. for the Blackwoodian Magazine—this for love of the cause I espoused. Do. for the Quarterly Review†—this for the love of myself, I believe, or, which is the same thing, for the love of £100, which I wanted for some odd purpose. As all these folks fight like dog and cat among themselves, my situation is much like the *Suave mare magno*, and so forth. . . . . .

"I hope your Grace will never think of answering the Gazettes at all, or even replying to letters of business, until you find it quite convenient and easy. The Gazette will continue to appear as materials occur. Indeed I expect, in the end of next week, to look in upon Bowhill, per the Selkirk mail, about

* Article on Maturin's *Women, or Pour et Contre.* (Miscellaneous Prose Works, Vol. XVIII.)

† Article on Childe Harold, Canto IV. (Misc. Prose Works, Vol. XVII.)

eight at night, with the hope of spending a day there, which will be more comfortable than at Abbotsford, where I should feel like a mouse below a firlot. If I find the Court can spare so important a person for one day, I shall order my pony up to meet me at Bowhill, and, supposing me to come on Friday night, I can easily return by the Blucher on Monday, dining and sleeping at Huntly Burn on the Sunday. So I shall receive all necessary reply in person."

Good Queen Charlotte died on the 17th of this month; and in writing to Mr Morritt on the 21st, Scott thus expresses what was, I believe, the universal feeling at the moment:—"So we have lost the old Queen. She has only had the sad prerogative of being kept alive by nursing for some painful weeks, whereas perhaps a subject might have closed the scene earlier. I fear the effect of this event on public manners—were there but a weight at the back of the drawing-room door, which would slam it in the face of w——s, its fall ought to be lamented; and I believe that poor Charlotte really adopted her rules of etiquette upon a feeling of duty. If we should suppose the Princess of Wales to have been at the head of the matronage of the land for these last ten years, what would have been the difference on public opinion! No man of experience will ever expect the breath of a court to be favourable to correct morals—*sed si non caste caute tamen.* One half of the mischief is done

by the publicity of the evil, which corrupts those which are near its influence, and fills with disgust and apprehension those to whom it does not directly extend. Honest old Evelyn's account of Charles the Second's court presses on one's recollection, and prepares the mind for anxious apprehensions."

Towards the end of this month Scott received from his kind friend Lord Sidmouth, then Secretary of State for the Home Department, the formal announcement of the Prince Regent's desire (which had been privately communicated some months earlier through the Lord Chief Commissioner Adam) to confer on him the rank of Baronet. When Scott first heard of the Regent's gracious intention, he had signified considerable hesitation about the prudence of his accepting any such accession of rank; for it had not escaped his observation, that such airy sounds, however modestly people may be disposed to estimate them, are apt to entail in the upshot additional cost upon their way of living, and to affect accordingly the plastic fancies, feelings, and habits of their children. But Lord Sidmouth's letter happened to reach him a few days after he had heard of the sudden death of his wife's brother, Charles Carpenter, who had bequeathed the reversion of his fortune to his sister's family; and this circumstance disposed Scott to wave his scruples, chiefly with a view to the professional advantage of his eldest son, who had by

this time fixed on the life of a soldier. As is usually the case, the estimate of Mr Carpenter's property transmitted at the time to England proved to have been an exaggerated one; as nearly as my present information goes, the amount was doubled. But as to the only question of any interest, to wit, how Scott himself felt on all these matters at the moment, the following letter to one whom he had long leaned to as a brother, will be more satisfactory than anything else it is in my power to quote:—

"*To J. B. S. Morritt, Esq., M.P., Rokeby.*

"Edinburgh, 7th December 1818.

"My Dear Morritt,

"I know you are indifferent to nothing that concerns us, and therefore I take an early opportunity to acquaint you with the mixture of evil and good which has very lately befallen us. On Saturday last we had the advice of the death of my wife's brother Charles Carpenter, commercial resident at Salem, in the Madras Establishment. This event has given her great distress. She has not, that we know of, a single blood-relation left in the world, for her uncle, the Chevalier de la Volere,* colonel of a Russian regiment, is believed to have been killed in

* I know nothing of the history or fate of this gentleman, except that he was an ardent royalist, and emigrated from France early in the Revolution.

the campaign of 1813. My wife has been very unwell for two days, and is only now sitting up and mixing with us. She has that sympathy which we are all bound to pay, but feels she wants that personal interest in her sorrow which could only be grounded on a personal acquaintance with the deceased.

"Mr Carpenter has, with great propriety, left his property in liferent to his wife—the capital to my children. It seems to amount to about £40,000. Upwards of £30,000 is in the British funds; the rest, to an uncertain value, in India. I hope this prospect of independence will not make my children different from that which they have usually been—docile, dutiful, and affectionate. I trust it will not. At least, the first expression of their feelings was honourable, for it was a unanimous wish to give up all to their mother. This I explained to them was out of the question; but that if they should be in possession at any time of this property, they ought, among them, to settle an income of £400 or £500 on their mother for her life, to supply her with a fund at her own uncontrolled disposal, for any indulgence or useful purpose that might be required. Mrs Scott will stand in no need of this; but it is a pity to let kind affections run to waste; and if they never have it in their power to pay such a debt, their willingness to have done so will be a pleasant reflection. I am Scotchman enough to hate the breaking up of family ties, and the too close adherence to personal pro-

perty. For myself, this event makes me neither richer nor poorer *directly;* but indirectly it will permit me to do something for my poor brother Tom's family, besides pleasing myself in '*plantings*, and *policies*, and *biggings*,'* with a safe conscience.

" There is another thing I have to whisper to your faithful ear. Our fat friend being desirous to honour Literature in my unworthy person, has intimated to me, by his organ the Doctor,† that, with consent ample and unanimous of all the potential voices of all his ministers, each more happy than another of course on so joyful an occasion, he proposes to dub me Baronet. It would be easy saying a parcel of fine things about my contempt of rank, and so forth; but although I would not have gone a step out of my way to have asked, or bought, or begged or borrowed a distinction, which to me personally will rather be inconvenient than otherwise, yet, coming as it does directly from the source of feudal honours, and as an honour, I am really gratified with it;—especially as it is intimated, that it is his Royal Highness's pleasure to heat the oven for me

* I believe this is a quotation from some old Scotch chronicler on the character of King James V.

† *The Doctor* was Mr Canning's nickname for Lord Sidmouth, the son of an accomplished physician, the intimate friend of the great Lord Chatham. Mr Sheridan, when the Scotch Members deserted the Addington administration upon a trying vote, had the grace to say to the Premier, across the table of the House of Commons,—" Doctor! the Thanes fly from thee!"

expressly, without waiting till he has some new *batch* of Baronets ready in dough. In plain English, I am to be gazetted *per se*. My poor friend Carpenter's bequest to my family has taken away a certain degree of *impecuniosity*, a necessity of saving cheese-parings and candle-ends, which always looks inconsistent with any little pretension to rank. But as things now stand, Advance banners in the name of God and Saint Andrew. Remember, I anticipate the jest, 'I like not such grinning honours as Sir Walter hath.'* After all, if one must speak for themselves, I have my quarters and emblazonments, free of all stain but Border theft and High Treason, which I hope are gentlemanlike crimes; and I hope Sir Walter Scott will not sound worse than Sir Humphry Davy, though my merits are as much under his, in point of utility, as can well be imagined. But a name is something, and mine is the better of the two. Set down this flourish to the account of national and provincial pride, for you must know we have more Messieurs de Sotenville† in our Border counties than any where else in the Lowlands—I cannot say for the Highlands. The Duke of Buceleuch, greatly to my joy, resolves to go to France for a season. Adam Fergusson goes with him, to glad him by the way. Charlotte and the young folks join in kind compliments. Most truly yours, WALTER SCOTT."

* Sir Walter Blunt— 1*st King Henry IV., Act V. Scene* 3.

† See Moliere's "George Dandin."

A few additional circumstances are given in a letter of the same week to Joanna Baillie. To her, after mentioning the testamentary provisions of Mr Carpenter, Scott says,—

"My Dear Friend,—I am going to tell you a little secret. I have changed my mind, or rather existing circumstances have led to my altering my opinions in a case of sublunary honour. I have now before me Lord Sidmouth's letter, containing the Prince's gracious and unsolicited intention to give me a Baronetcy. It will neither make me better nor worse than I feel myself—in fact it will be an incumbrance rather than otherwise; but it may be of consequence to Walter, for the title is worth something in the army, although not in a learned profession. The Duke of Buccleuch and Scott of Harden, who, as the heads of my clan and the sources of my gentry, are good judges of what I ought to do, have both given me their earnest opinion to accept of an honour directly derived from the source of honour, and neither begged nor bought, as is the usual fashion. Several of my ancestors bore the title in the 17th century; and were it of consequence, I have no reason to be ashamed of the decent and respectable persons who connect me with that period when they carried into the field, like Madoc—

'The crescent, at whose gleam the *Cambrian* oft,
Cursing his perilous tenure, wound his horn'—

so that, as a gentleman, I may stand on as good a footing as other new creations. Respecting the reasons peculiar to myself which have made the Prince show his respect for general literature in my person, I cannot be a good judge, and your friendly zeal will make you a partial one: the purpose is fair, honourable, and creditable to the Sovereign, even though it should number him among the monarchs who made blunders in literary patronage. You know Pope says —

> 'The Hero William, and the Martyr Charles,
> One knighted Blackmore, and one pension'd Quarles.'*

So let the intention sanctify the error, if there should be one, on this great occasion. The time of this grand affair is uncertain; it is coupled with an invitation to London, which it would be inconvenient to me to accept, unless it should happen that I am called to come up by the affairs of poor Carpenter's estate. Indeed, the prospects of my children form the principal reason for a change of sentiments upon this flattering offer, joined to my belief that, though I may still be a scribbler from inveterate habit, I shall hardly engage again in any work of consequence.

"We had a delightful visit from the Richardsons, only rather too short; he will give you a picture of Abbotsford, but not as it exists in my mind's eye,

* Imitations of Horace, B. ii. Ep. 1. v. 386.

waving with all its future honours. The pinasters are thriving very well, and in a year or two more Joanna's Bower will be worthy of the name. At present it is like Sir Roger de Coverley's portrait, which hovered between its resemblance to the good knight and to a Saracen. Now the said bower has still such a resemblance to its original character of a gravel pit, that it is not fit to be shown to 'bairns and fools,' who, according to our old canny proverb, should never see half-done work; but Nature, if she works slowly, works surely, and your laurels at Abbotsford will soon flourish as fair as those you have won on Parnassus. I rather fear that a quantity of game which was shipped awhile ago at Inverness for the Doctor, never reached him: it is rather a transitory commodity in London; there were ptarmigan, grouse, and black game. I shall be grieved if they have miscarried. My health, thank God, continues as strong as at any period in my life; only I think of rule and diet more than I used to do, and observe as much as in me lies the advice of my friendly physician, who took such kind care of me: my best respects attend him, Mrs Baillie, and Mrs Agnes. Ever, my dear friend, most faithfully yours, W. S."

In the next of these letters Scott alludes, among other things, to a scene of innocent pleasure which I often witnessed afterwards. The whole of the ancient ceremonial of the *daft days*, as they are called in

Scotland, obtained respect at Abbotsford. He said it was *uncanny*, and would certainly have felt it very uncomfortable, not to welcome the new year in the midst of his family and a few old friends, with the immemorial libation of a *het pint;* but of all the consecrated ceremonies of the time, none gave him such delight as the visit which he received as *Laird* from all the children on his estate, on the last morning of every December—when, in the words of an obscure poet often quoted by him,

> "The cottage bairns sing blythe and gay,
> At the ha' door for *hogmanay*."

"*To Miss Joanna Baillie, Hampstead.*

"Abbotsford, 1st January 1819.

"My Dear Friend,

"Many thanks for your kind letter: ten brace of ptarmigan sailed from Inverness about the 24th, directed for Dr Baillie; if they should have reached, I hope you would seize some for yourself and friends, as I learn the Doctor is on duty at Windsor. I do not know the name of the vessel, but they were addressed to Dr Baillie, London, which I trust was enough, for there are not *two*. The Doctor has been exercising his skill upon my dear friend and chief, the Duke of Buccleuch, to whom I am more attached than to any person beyond the reach of my own family, and has advised him to do what, by my ear-

nest advice, he ought to have done three years ago— namely, to go to Lisbon: he left this vicinity with much reluctance to go to Toulouse, but if he will be advised, should not stop save in Portugal or the south of Spain. The Duke is one of those retired and high-spirited men who will never be known until the world asks what became of the huge oak that grew on the brow of the hill, and sheltered such an extent of ground. During the late distress, though his own immense rents remained in arrears, and though I know he was pinched for money, as all men were, but more especially the possessors of entailed estates, he absented himself from London in order to pay with ease to himself the labourers employed on his various estates. These amounted (for I have often seen the roll and helped to check it) to nine hundred and fifty men, working at day wages, each of whom on a moderate average might maintain three persons, since the single men have mothers, sisters, and aged or very young relations to protect and assist. Indeed it is wonderful how much even a small sum, comparatively, will do in supporting the Scottish labourer, who is in his natural state perhaps one of the best, most intelligent, and kind-hearted of human beings; and in truth I have limited my other habits of expense very much since I fell into the habit of employing mine honest people. I wish you could have seen about a hundred children, being almost entirely supported by their fathers' or brothers' la-

bour, come down yesterday to dance to the pipes, and get a piece of cake and bannock, and pence a-piece (no very deadly largess) in honour of *hogmanay*. I declare to you, my dear friend, that when I thought the poor fellows who kept these children so neat, and well taught, and well behaved, were slaving the whole day for eighteen-pence or twenty-pence at the most, I was ashamed of their gratitude, and of their becks and bows. But after all, one does what one can, and it is better twenty families should be comfortable according to their wishes and habits, than half that number should be raised above their situation. Besides, like Fortunio in the fairy tale, I have my gifted men—the best wrestler and cudgel-player—the best runner and leaper—the best shot in the little district; and as I am partial to all manly and athletic exercises, these are great favourites, being otherwise decent persons, and bearing their faculties meekly. All this smells of sad egotism, but what can I write to you about, save what is uppermost in my own thoughts; and here am I, thinning old plantations and planting new ones; now undoing what has been done, and now doing what I suppose no one would do but myself, and accomplishing all my magical transformations by the arms and legs of the aforesaid genii, conjured up to my aid at eighteen-pence a-day. There is no one with me but my wife, to whom the change of scene and air, with the facility of easy and uninterrupted exercise, is of service. The young people

remain in Edinburgh to look after their lessons, and Walter, though passionately fond of shooting, only staid three days with us, his mind running entirely on mathematics and fortification, French and German. One of the excellencies of Abbotsford is very bad pens and ink; and besides, this being New Year's Day, and my writing-room above the servants' hall, the progress of my correspondence is a little interrupted by the Piper singing Gaelic songs to the servants, and their applause in consequence. Adieu, my good and indulgent friend: the best influences of the New Year attend you and yours, who so well deserve all that they can bring. Most affectionately yours, WALTER SCOTT."

Before quitting the year 1818, I ought to have mentioned that among Scott's miscellaneous occupations in its autumn, he found time to contribute some curious materials toward a new edition of Burt's Letters from the North of Scotland, which had been undertaken by his old acquaintance, Mr Robert Jameson. During the winter session he appears to have made little progress with his novel; his painful seizures of cramp were again recurring frequently, and he probably thought it better to allow the story of Lammermoor to lie over until his health should be re-established. In the mean time he drew up a set of topographical and historical essays, which originally appeared in the successive numbers of the

splendidly illustrated work, entitled Provincial Antiquities of Scotland.* But he did this merely to gratify his own love of the subject, and because, well or ill, he must be doing something. He declined all pecuniary recompense; but afterwards, when the success of the publication was secure, accepted from the proprietors some of the beautiful drawings by Turner, Thomson, and other artists, which had been prepared to accompany his text. These drawings are now in the little breakfast room at Abbotsford—the same which had been constructed for his own den, and which I found him occupying as such in the spring of 1819.

In the course of December 1818, he also opened an important negotiation with Messrs Constable, which was completed early in the ensuing year. The cost of his building had, as is usual, exceeded his calculation; and he had both a large addition to it, and some new purchases of land, in view. Moreover, his eldest son had now fixed on the cavalry, in which service every step infers very considerable expense. The details of this negotiation are remarkable; Scott considered himself as a very fortunate man when Constable, who at first offered £10,000 for all his then existing copyrights, agreed to give for them £12,000. Meeting a friend in the street, just after the deed had been executed, he said he wagered no man could

* These charming essays are now reprinted in his Miscellaneous Prose Works (Edit. 1834), Vol. VII.

guess at how large a price Constable had estimated his "eild kye" (cows barren from age). The copyrights thus transferred were, as specified in the instrument —

"The said Walter Scott, Esq.'s present share, being the entire copyright, of Waverley.

Do.	do.	Guy Mannering.
Do.	do.	Antiquary.
Do.	do.	Rob Roy.
Do.	do.	Tales of my Landlord, 1st Series.
Do.	do.	do. 2d Series.
Do.	do.	do. 3d Series.
Do.	do.	Bridal of Triermain.
Do.	do.	Harold the Dauntless.
Do.	do.	Sir Tristrem.
Do.	do.	Roderick Collection.
Do.	do.	Paul's Letters.
Do.	being one eighth of	The Lay of the Last Minstrel.
Do.	being one half of	The Lady of the Lake.
Do.	being one half of	Rokeby.
Do.	being one half of	The Lord of the Isles."

The instrument contained a clause binding Messrs Constable never to divulge the name of the Author of Waverley during his life, under a penalty of £2000.

I may observe, that had these booksellers fulfilled their part of this agreement, by paying off, prior to their insolvency in 1826, the whole bonds for £12,000, which they signed on the 2d of February 1819, no interest in the copyrights above specified could have been expected to revert to the Author of Waverley: but more of this in due season.

He alludes to the progress of the treaty in the following letter to Captain Adam Fergusson, who had, as has already appeared, left Scotland with the Duke of Buccleuch. His Grace hearing, when in London, that one of the Barons of Exchequer at Edinburgh meant speedily to resign, the Captain had, by his desire, written to urge on Scott the propriety of renewing his application for a seat on that bench; which, however, Scott at once refused to do. There were several reasons for this abstinence; among others, he thought such a promotion at this time would interfere with a project which he had formed of joining "the Chief and the Aid-de-camp" in the course of the spring, and accomplishing in their society the tour of Portugal and Spain—perhaps of Italy also. Some such excursion had been strongly recommended to him by his own physicians, as the likeliest means of interrupting those habits of sedulous exertion at the desk, which they all regarded as the true source of his recent ailments, and the only serious obstacle to his cure; and his standing as a Clerk of Session, considering how largely he had laboured in that capacity for infirm brethren, would have easily secured him a twelvemonth's leave of absence from the Judges of his Court. But the principal motive was, as we shall see, his reluctance to interfere with the claims of the then Sheriff of Mid-Lothian, his own and Fergusson's old friend and school-fellow, Sir William Rae—who, however, accepted the more ambitious

post of Lord Advocate, in the course of the ensuing summer.

" *To Captain Adam Fergusson, Ditton Park, Windsor.*

" 15th January 1819.

" Dear Adam.

" Many thanks for your kind letter, this moment received. I would not for the world stand in Jackie (I beg his pardon, Sir John) Peartree's way.* He has merited the cushion *en haut*, and besides he needs it. To me it would make little difference in point of income. The *otium cum dignitate*, if it ever come, will come as well years after this as now. Besides, I am afraid the opening will be soon made, through the death of our dear friend the Chief Baron, of whose health the accounts are unfavourable.† Immediate promotion would be inconvenient to me, rather than otherwise, because I have the desire, like an old fool as I am, *courir un peu le monde*. I am beginning to draw out from my literary commerce. Constable has offered me £10,000 for the copyrights of

* *Jackie Peartree* had, it seems, been Sir William Rae's nickname at the High School. He probably owed it to some exploit in an orchard.

† The Right Honourable Robert Dundas of Arniston, Chief Baron of the Scotch Exchequer, died 17th June 1819. See *post*, p. 170.

published works which have already produced more than twice the sum. I stand out for £12,000. Tell this to the Duke; he knows how I managed to keep the hen till the rainy day was past. I will write two lines to Lord Melville, just to make my bow for the present, resigning any claims I have through the patronage of my kindest and best friend, for I have no other, till the next opportunity. I should have been truly vexed if the Duke had thought of writing about this. I don't wish to hear from him till I can have his account of the lines of Torres Vedras. I care so little how or where I travel, that I am not sure at all whether I shall not come to Lisbon and surprise you, instead of going to Italy by Switzerland; that is, providing the state of Spain would allow me, without any unreasonable danger of my throat, to get from Lisbon to Madrid, and thence to Gibraltar. I am determined to roll a little about, for I have lost much of my usual views of summer pleasure here. But I trust we shall have one day the Maid of Lorn (recovered of her lameness), and Charlie Stuart (reconciled to bogs), and Sybil Grey (no longer retrograde), and the Duke set up by a southern climate, and his military and civil aides-de-camp, with all the rout of younkers and dogs, and a brown hill side, introductory to a good dinner at Bowhill or Drumlanrig, and a merry evening. Amen, and God send it. As to my mouth being stopped with the froth of the title, that is, as the

learned Partridge says, a *non sequitur*. You know the schoolboy's expedient of first asking mustard for his beef, and then beef for his mustard. Now, as they put the mustard on my plate, without my asking it, I shall consider myself, time and place serving, as entitled to ask a slice of beef; that is to say, I would do so if I cared much about it; but as it is, I trust it to time and chance, which, as you, dear Adam, know, have (added to the exertions of kind friends) been wonderful allies of mine. People usually wish their letters to come to hand, but I hope you will not receive this in Britain. I am impatient to hear you have sailed. All here are well and hearty. The Baronet* and I propose to go up to the Castle to-morrow to fix on the most convenient floor of the Crown House for your mansion, in hopes you will stand treat for gin-grog and Cheshire cheese on your return, to reward our labour. The whole expense will fall within the Treasury order, and it is important to see things made convenient. I will write a long letter to the Duke to Lisbon. Yours ever,

WALTER SCOTT.

"P. S.—No news here, but that the goodly hulk of conceit and tallow, which was called Macculloch, of the Royal Hotel, Prince's Street, was put to bed dead-drunk on Wednesday night, and taken out the next morning dead-by-itself-dead. Mair skaith at Sheriffmuir."

* Mr William Clerk.

"*To J. Richardson, Esq., Fludyer Street, Westminster.*

"Edinburgh, 18th January 1819.

"My Dear Richardson,

"Many thanks for your kind letter. I own I did mystify Mrs * * * * * a little about the report you mention; and I am glad to hear the finesse succeeded.* She came up to me with a great overflow of gratitude for the delight and pleasure, and so forth, which she owed to me on account of these books. Now, as she knew very well that I had never owned myself the author, this was not *polite* politeness, and she had no right to force me up into a corner and compel me to tell her a word more than I chose, upon a subject which concerned no one but myself—and I have no notion of being pumped by any old dowager Lady of Session, male or female. So I gave in dilatory defences, under protestation to add and eik; for I trust, in learning a new slang, you have not forgot the old. In plain words, I denied the charge, and as she insisted to know who else *could* write these novels, I suggested Adam Fergusson as a person having all the information and capacity necessary for that purpose. But the inference that he *was* the author was of her own deducing; and thus ended her attempt, notwithstanding her having primed the pump

* The wife of one of the Edinburgh Judges is alluded to.

with a good dose of flattery. It is remarkable, that among all my real friends to whom I did not choose to communicate this matter, not one ever thought it proper or delicate to tease me about it. Respecting the knighthood, I can only say, that coming as it does, and I finding myself and my family in circumstances which will not render the *petit titre* ridiculous, I think there would be more vanity in declining than in accepting what is offered to me by the express wish of the Sovereign as a mark of favour and distinction. Will you be so kind as to enquire and let me know what the fees, &c., of a baronetcy amount to—for I must provide myself accordingly, not knowing exactly when this same title may descend upon me. I am afraid the sauce is rather smart. I should like also to know what is to be done respecting registration of arms and so forth. Will you make these enquiries for me *sotto voce*? I should not suppose, from the persons who sometimes receive this honour, that there is any enquiry about descent or genealogy; mine were decent enough folks, and enjoyed the honour in the seventeenth century, so I shall not be first of the title; and it will sound like that of a Christian knight, as Sir Sidney Smith said.

"I had a letter from our immortal Joanna some fortnight since, when I was enjoying myself at Abbotsford. Never was there such a season, flowers

springing, birds singing, grubs eating the wheat—as if it was the end of May. After all, nature had a grotesque and inconsistent appearance, and I could not help thinking she resembled a withered beauty who persists in looking youthy, and dressing conform thereto. I thought the loch should have had its blue frozen surface, and russet all about it, instead of an unnatural gaiety of green. So much are we the children of habit, that we cannot always enjoy thoroughly the alterations which are most for our advantage. They have filled up the historical chair here. I own I wish it had been with our friend Campbell, whose genius is such an honour to his country. But he has cast anchor I suppose in the south. Your friend, Mrs Scott, was much cast down with her brother's death. His bequest to my family leaves my own property much at my own disposal, which is pleasant enough. I was foolish enough sometimes to be vexed at the prospect of my library being sold *sub hasta*, which is now less likely to happen. I always am, most truly yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

On the 15th of February 1819, Scott witnessed the first representation, on the Edinburgh boards, of the most meritorious and successful of all the *Terry-fications*, though Terry himself was not the manufacturer. The drama of *Rob Roy* will never again

be got up so well, in all its parts, as it then was by William Murray's company; the manager's own *Captain Thornton* was excellent—and so was the *Dugald Creature* of a Mr Duff—there was also a good *Mattie*—(about whose equipment, by the by, Scott felt such interest that he left his box between the acts to remind Mr Murray that she "must have a mantle with her lanthorn;")—but the great and unrivalled attraction was the personification of *Bailie Jarvie*, by Charles Mackay, who, being himself a native of Glasgow, entered into the minutest peculiarities of the character with high *gusto*, and gave the west-country dialect in its most racy perfection. It was extremely diverting to watch the play of Scott's features during this admirable realization of his conception; and I must add, that the behaviour of the Edinburgh audience on all such occasions, while the secret of the novels was preserved, reflected great honour on their good taste and delicacy of feeling. He seldom, in those days, entered his box without receiving some mark of general respect and admiration; but I never heard of any pretext being laid hold of to connect these demonstrations with the piece he had come to witness, or, in short, to do or say anything likely to interrupt his quiet enjoyment of the evening in the midst of his family and friends. The *Rob Roy* had a continued run of forty-one nights, during February and March; and it was played once a-week, at least, for many years after-

wards.* Mackay, of course, always selected it for his benefit; and I now print from Scott's MS. a letter, which, no doubt, reached the mimic Bailie in the handwriting of one of the Ballantynes, on the first of these occurrences.

"*To Mr Charles Mackay, Theatre-Royal, Edin^r.*

(*Private.*)

"Friend Mackay,

"My lawful occasions having brought me from my residence at Gandercleuch to this great city, it was my lot to fall into company with certain friends, who impetrated from me a consent to behold the stage-play, which hath been framed forth of an history entitled Rob (*seu potius* Robert) Roy, which history, although it existeth not in mine erudite work, entitled Tales of my Landlord, hath nathless a near relation in style and structure to those pleasant narrations. Wherefore, having surmounted those arguments whilk were founded upon the unseemliness of a personage in my place and profession appearing in an open stage-play house, and having buttoned the terminations of my cravat into my bosom, in order to preserve mine incognito, and indued an outer coat over mine usual garments, so that the hue thereof

* "Between February 15th, 1819, and March 14th, 1837, Rob Roy was played in the Theatre-Royal, Edinburgh, 285 times".—*Letter from Mr W. Murray.*

might not betray my calling, I did place myself (much elbowed by those who little knew whom they did incommode) in that place of the Theatre called the two-shilling gallery, and beheld the show with great delectation, even from the rising of the curtain to the fall thereof.

"Chiefly, my facetious friend, was I enamoured of the very lively representation of Bailie Nicol Jarvie, in so much that I became desirous to communicate to thee my great admiration thereof, nothing doubting that it will give thee satisfaction to be apprised of the same. Yet further, in case thou shouldst be of that numerous class of persons who set less store by good words than good deeds, and understanding that there is assigned unto each stage-player a special night, called a benefit (it will do thee no harm to know that the phrase cometh from two Latin words, *bene* and *facio*), on which their friends and patrons show forth their benevolence, I now send thee mine in the form of a five-ell web (*hoc jocose*, to express a note for £5), as a meet present for the Bailie, himself a weaver, and the son of a worthy deacon of that craft. The which propine I send thee in token that it is my purpose, business and health permitting, to occupy the central place of the pit on the night of thy said beneficiary or benefit.

"Friend Mackay! from one, whose profession it is to teach others, thou must excuse the freedom of a caution. I trust thou wilt remember that, as excel-

lence in thine art cannot be attained without much labour, so neither can it be extended, or even maintained, without constant and unremitted exertion; and farther, that the decorum of a performer's private character (and it gladdeth me to hear that thine is respectable) addeth not a little to the value of his public exertions.

"Finally, in respect there is nothing perfect in this world,—at least I have never received a wholly faultless version from the very best of my pupils—I pray thee not to let Rob Roy twirl thee around in the ecstacy of thy joy, in regard it oversteps the limits of nature, which otherwise thou so sedulously preservest in thine admirable national portraicture of Bailie Nicol Jarvie.—I remain thy sincere friend and well-wisher, JEDEDIAH CLEISHBOTHAM."

CHAPTER XLIV.

Recurrence of Scott's illness — Death of the Duke of Buccleuch — Letters to Captain Fergusson, Lord Montagu, Mr Southey, and Mr Shortreed — Scott's sufferings while dictating the Bride of Lammermoor — Anecdotes by James Ballantyne, &c. — Appearance of the Third Series of Tales of my Landlord — Anecdote of the Earl of Buchan.

MARCH — JUNE, 1819.

It had beeen Scott's purpose to spend the Easter vacation in London, and receive his baronetcy; but this was prevented by the serious recurrence of the malady which so much alarmed his friends in the early part of the year 1817, and which had continued ever since to torment him at intervals. The subsequent correspondence will show that afflictions of various sorts were accumulated on his head at the same period:—

" *To the Lord Montagu, Ditton Park, Windsor.*

" Edinburgh, 4th March 1819.

" My Dear Lord,

" The Lord President tells me he has a letter from his son, Captain Charles Hope, R.N., who had just taken leave of our High Chief, upon the deck of the Liffey. He had not seen the Duke for a fortnight, and was pleasingly surprised to find his health and general appearance so very much improved. For my part, having watched him with such unremitting attention, I feel very confident in the effect of a change of air and of climate. It is with great pleasure that I find the Duke has received an answer from me respecting a matter about which he was anxious, and on which I could make his mind quite easy. His Grace wished Adam Fergusson to assist him as his confidential secretary; and with all the scrupulous delicacy that belongs to his character, he did not like to propose this, except through my medium as a common friend. Now, I can answer for Adam, as I can for myself, that he will have the highest pleasure in giving assistance in every possible way the Duke can desire; and if forty years' intimacy can entitle one man to speak for another, I believe the Duke can find nowhere a person so highly qualified for such a confidential situation. He was edu-

cated for business, understands it well, and was long a military secretary—his temper and manners your Lordship can judge as well as I can, and his worth and honour are of the very first water. I confess I should not be surprised if the Duke should wish to continue the connexion even afterwards, for I have often thought that two hours' letter-writing, which is his Grace's daily allowance, is rather worse than the duty of a Clerk of Session, because there is no vacation. Much of this might surely be saved by an intelligent friend, on whose style of expression, prudence, and secrecy, his Grace could put perfect reliance. Two words marked on any letter by his own hand, would enable such a person to refuse more or less positively—to grant directly or conditionally—or, in short, to maintain the exterior forms of the very troublesome and extensive correspondence which his Grace's high situation entails upon him. I think it is Mons. Le Duc de Saint Simon who tells us of one of Louis XIV.'s ministers *qui'l avoit la plume*—which he explains by saying, it was his duty to imitate the King's handwriting so closely, as to be almost undistinguishable, and make him on all occasions *parler très noblement.* I wonder how the Duke gets on without such a friend. In the mean time, however, I am glad I can assure him of Fergusson's willing and ready assistance while abroad; and I am happy to find still farther that he had got that assurance before they sailed, for tedious hours occur

on board of ship, when it will serve as a relief to talk over any of the private affairs which the Duke wishes to intrust to him.

"I have been very unwell from a visitation of my old enemy, the cramp in my stomach, which much resembles, as I conceive, the process by which *the deil* would make one's *king's-hood* into a *spleuchan*,* according to the anathema of Burns. Unfortunately, the opiates which the medical people think indispensable to relieve spasms, bring on a habit of body which has to be counteracted by medicines of a different tendency, so as to produce a most disagreeable see-saw—a kind of pull-devil, pull-baker contention, the field of battle being my unfortunate *præcordia*. I am better to-day, and I trust shall be able to dispense with these alternations. I still hope to be in London in April.

"I will write to the Duke regularly, for distance of place acts in a contrary ratio on the mind and on the eye: trifles, instead of being diminished, as in prospect, become important and interesting, and therefore he shall have a budget of them. Hogg is here busy with his Jacobite songs. I wish he may get handsomely through, for he is profoundly ignorant of history, and it is an awkward thing to read in

* *King's-Hood*—"The second of the four stomachs of ruminating animals." JAMIESON.—*Spleuchan*—The Gaelic name of the Highlander's tobacco-pouch.

order that you may write.* I give him all the help I can, but he sometimes poses me. For instance he came yesterday, open mouth, enquiring what great dignified clergyman had distinguished himself at Killiecrankie—not exactly the scene where one would have expected a churchman to shine—and I found with some difficulty, that he had mistaken Major-General Canon, called, in Kennedy's Latin Song, *Canonicus Gallovidiensis*, for the canon of a cathedral. *Ex ungue leonem.* Ever, my dear Lord, your truly obliged and faithful WALTER SCOTT."

Before this letter reached Lord Montagu, his brother had sailed for Lisbon. The Duke of Wellington had placed his house in that capital (the Palace *das Necessidades*) at the Duke of Buccleuch's disposal; and in the affectionate care and cheerful society of Captain Fergusson, the invalid had every additional source of comfort that his friends could have wished for him. But the malady had gone too far to be arrested by a change of climate; and the

* "I am sure I produced two volumes of Jacobite Relics, such as no man in Scotland or England could have produced but myself." So says Hogg, *ipse*—see his *Autobiography*, 1832, p. 88. I never saw the Shepherd so elated as he was on the appearance of a very severe article on this book in the Edinburgh Review; for, to his exquisite delight, the hostile critic selected for *exceptive* encomium one "old Jacobite strain," viz. "Donald M'Gillavry," which Hogg had fabricated the year before. Scott, too, enjoyed this joke almost as much as the Shepherd.

that will serve our purpose better than anything we ourselves could do." I have forgotten the names of the "tales," which, being published accordingly, fell still-born from the press. Mr Southey had likewise dropped some allusions to another newspaper story of Scott's being seriously engaged in a dramatic work; a rumour which probably originated in the assistance he had lent to Terry in some of the recent highly popular adaptations of his novels to the purposes of the stage; though it is not impossible that some hint of the *Devorgoil* matter may have transpired. "It is reported," said the Laureate, "that you are about to bring forth a play, and I am greatly in hopes it may be true; for I am verily persuaded that in this course you might run as brilliant a career as you have already done in narrative—both in prose and rhyme; —for as for believing that you have a double in the field—not I! Those same powers would be equally certain of success in the drama, and were you to give them a dramatic direction, and reign for a third seven years upon the stage, you would stand alone in literary history. Indeed already I believe that no man ever afforded so much delight to so great a number of his contemporaries in this or in any other country. God bless you, my dear Scott, and believe me ever yours affectionately, R. S." Mr Southey's letter had further announced his wife's safe delivery of a son; the approach of the conclusion of his History of Brazil; and his undertaking of the Life of Wesley.

" *To Robert Southey, Esq., Keswick.*

" Abbotsford, 4th April 1819.

" My Dear Southey,

" Tidings from you must be always acceptable, even were the bowl in the act of breaking at the fountain,—and my health is at present very *totterish.* I have gone through a cruel succession of spasms and sickness, which have terminated in a special fit of the jaundice, so that I might sit for the image of Plutus, the god of specie, so far as complexion goes. I shall like our American acquaintance the better that he has sharpened your remembrance of me, but he is also a wondrous fellow for romantic lore and antiquarian research, considering his country. I have now seen four or five well-lettered Americans, ardent in pursuit of knowledge, and free from the ignorance and forward presumption which distinguish many of their countrymen. I hope they will inoculate their country with a love of letters, so nearly allied to a desire of peace and a sense of public justice, virtues to which the great Transatlantic community is more strange than could be wished. Accept my best and most sincere wishes for the health and strength of your latest pledge of affection. When I think what you have already suffered, I can imagine with what mixture of feelings this event must necessarily affect you; but you need not to be told that we are in

better guidance than our own. I trust in God this late blessing will be permanent, and inherit your talents and virtues. When I look around me, and see how many men seem to make it their pride to misuse high qualifications, can I be less interested than I truly am, in the fate of one who has uniformly dedicated his splendid powers to maintaining the best interests of humanity? I am very angry at the time you are to be in London, as I must be there in about a fortnight, or so soon as I can shake off this depressing complaint, and it would add not a little that I should meet you there. My chief purpose is to put my eldest son into the army. I could have wished he had chosen another profession, but have no title to combat a choice which would have been my own had my lameness permitted. Walter has apparently the dispositions and habits fitted for the military profession, a very quiet and steady temper, an attachment to mathematics and their application, good sense, and uncommon personal strength and activity, with address in most exercises, particularly horsemanship.

"—I had written thus far last week when I was interrupted, first by the arrival of our friend Ticknor with Mr Cogswell, another well-accomplished Yankee —(by the by, we have them of all sorts, *e. g.* one Mr *******, rather a fine man, whom the girls have christened, with some humour, the Yankee Doodle *Dandie.*) They have had Tom Drum's en-

tertainment, for I have been seized with one or two successive *crises* of my cruel malady, lasting in the utmost anguish from eight to ten hours. If I had not the strength of a team of horses, I could never have fought through it, and through the heavy fire of medical artillery, scarce less exhausting — for bleeding, blistering, calomel, and ipecacuanha have gone on without intermission — while, during the agony of the spasms, laudanum became necessary in the most liberal doses, though inconsistent with the general treatment. I did not lose my senses, because I resolved to keep them, but I thought once or twice they would have gone overboard, top and top-gallant. I should be a great fool, and a most ungrateful wretch, to complain of such inflictions as these. My life has been, in all its private and public relations, as fortunate perhaps as was ever lived, up to this period; and whether pain or misfortune may lie behind the dark curtain of futurity, I am already a sufficient debtor to the bounty of Providence to be resigned to it. Fear is an evil that has never mixed with my nature, nor has even unwonted good fortune rendered my love of life tenacious; and so I can look forward to the possible conclusion of these scenes of agony with reasonable equanimity, and suffer chiefly through the sympathetic distress of my family.

—— " Other ten days have passed away, for I would not send this Jeremiad to tease you, while its termination seemed doubtful. For the present,

'The game is done — I've won, I've won,
Quoth she, and whistles thrice.' *

I am this day, for the first time, free from the relics of my disorder, and, except in point of weakness, perfectly well. But no broken-down hunter had ever so many sprung sinews, whelks, and bruises. I am like Sancho after the doughty affair of the Yanguesian Carriers, and all through the unnatural twisting of the muscles under the influence of that *Goule* the cramp. I must be swathed in Goulard and Rosemary spirits — *probatum est.*

"I shall not fine and renew a lease of popularity upon the theatre. To write for low, ill-informed, and conceited actors, whom you must please, for your success is necessarily at their mercy, I cannot away with. How would you, or how do you think I should, relish being the object of such a letter as Kean† wrote t'other day to a poor author, who, though a pedantic blockhead, had at least the right to be treated as a gentleman by a copper-laced, twopenny tearmouth, rendered mad by conceit and success? Besides, if this objection were out of the way, I do not think the character of the audience in London is such that one could have the least pleasure in pleasing them. One half come to prosecute their de-

* These lines are from Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner.*

† The reader will find something about this actor's quarrel with Mr Bucke, author of "The Italians," in Barry Cornwall's *Life of Kean*, vol. ii. p. 178.

baucheries, so openly that it would degrade a bagnio. Another set to snooze off their beef-steaks and port wine; a third are critics of the fourth column of the newspaper; fashion, wit, or literature there is not; and, on the whole, I would far rather write verses for mine honest friend Punch and his audience. The only thing that could tempt me to be so silly, would be to assist a friend in such a degrading task who was to have the whole profit and shame of it.

"Have you seen decidedly the most full and methodized collection of Spanish romances (ballads) published by the industry of Depping (Altenburgh and Leipsic), 1817? It is quite delightful. Ticknor had set me agog to see it, without affording me any hope it could be had in London, when by one of these fortunate chances which have often marked my life, a friend, who had been lately on the Continent, came unexpectedly to inquire for me, and plucked it forth *par manière de cadeau.* God prosper you, my dear Southey, in your labours; but do not work too hard—*experto crede.* This conclusion, as well as the confusion of my letter, like the Bishop of Grenada's sermon, savours of the apoplexy. My most respectful compliments attend Mrs S. Yours truly,

WALTER SCOTT.

"P. S.—I shall long to see the conclusion of the Brazil history, which, as the interest comes nearer, must rise even above the last noble volume. Wesley

you alone can touch; but will you not have the hive about you? When I was about twelve years old, I heard him preach more than once, standing on a chair, in Kelso churchyard. He was a most venerable figure, but his sermons were vastly too colloquial for the taste of Saunders. He told many excellent stories. One I remember, which he said had happened to him at Edinburgh. 'A drunken dragoon,' said Wesley, 'was commencing an assertion in military fashion, G—d eternally d—n me, just as I was passing. I touched the poor man on the shoulder, and when he turned round fiercely, said calmly, you mean *God bless you.*' In the mode of telling the story he failed not to make us sensible how much his patriarchal appearance, and mild yet bold rebuke, overawed the soldier, who touched his hat, thanked him, and, I think, came to chapel that evening.'

"*To Robert Shortreed, Esq., Sheriff Substitute, &c. Jedburgh.*

"Abbotsford, 13th April 1819.

"Dear Bob,

"I am very desirous to procure, and as soon as possible, Mrs Shortreed's excellent receipt for making yeast. The Duke of Buccleuch complains extremely of the sour yeast at Lisbon as disagreeing with his stomach, and I never tasted half such good bread as Mrs Shortreed has baked at home. I am sure you

will be as anxious as I am that the receipt should be forwarded to his Grace as soon as possible. I remember Mrs Shortreed giving a most distinct account of the whole affair. It should be copied over in a very distinct hand, lest Mons. Florence makes blunders.

"I am recovering from my late indisposition, but as weak as water. To write these lines is a fatigue. I scarce think I can be at the circuit at all — certainly only for an hour or two. So on this occasion I will give Mrs Shortreed's kind hospitality a little breathing time. I am tired even with writing these few lines. Yours ever, WALTER SCOTT."*

"*To His Grace the Duke of Buccleuch, &c. Lisbon.*

"Abbotsford, 15th April 1819.

"My Dear Lord Duke,

"How very strange it seems that this should be the first letter I address to your Grace, and you so long absent from Scotland, and looking for all the news and nonsense of which I am in general such a faithful reporter. Alas! I have been ill — very — very

* "Sir Walter got not only the recipe for making bread from us — but likewise learnt the best mode of cutting it 'in a family way.' The bread-board and large knife used at Abbotsford at breakfast-time, were adopted by Sir Walter, after seeing them 'work well' in our family." — *Note by Mr Andrew Shortrede.*

ill — only Dr Baillie says there is nothing of consequence about my malady *except the pain* — a pretty exception — said pain being intense enough to keep me roaring as loud as your Grace's ci-devant John of Lorn, and of, generally speaking, from six to eight hours' incessant duration, only varied by intervals of deadly sickness. Poor Sophia was alone with me for some time, and managed a half distracted pack of servants with spirit, and sense, and presence of mind, far beyond her years, never suffering her terror at seeing me in a state so new to her, and so alarming, to divert her mind an instant from what was fit and proper to be done. Pardon this side compliment to your Grace's little Jacobite, to whom you have always been so kind, If sympathy could have cured me, I should not have been long ill. Gentle and simple were all equally kind, and even old Tom Watson crept down from Falshope to see how I was coming on, and to ejaculate 'if anything ailed the Shirra, it would be sair on the Duke.' The only unwelcome resurrection was that of old * * *, whose feud with me (or rather dryness) I had well hoped was immortal; but he came jinking over the moor with daughters and ponies, and God knows what, to look after my precious health. I cannot tolerate that man; it seems to me as if I hated him for things not only past and present, but for some future offence which is as yet in the womb of fate.

"I have had as many remedies sent me for cramp

and jaundice as would set up a quack doctor—three from Mrs Plummer, each better than the other—one at least from every gardener in the neighbourhood—besides all sorts of recommendations to go to Cheltenham, to Harrowgate, to Jericho for aught I know. Now if there is one thing I detest more than another, it is a watering-place, unless a very pleasant party be previously formed, when, as Tony Lumpkin says, 'a gentleman may be in a concatenation.' The most extraordinary recipe was that of my Highland piper, John Bruce, who spent a whole Sunday in selecting twelve stones from twelve *south-running* streams, with the purpose that I should sleep upon them, and be whole. I caused him to be told that the recipe was infallible, but that it was absolutely necessary to success that the stones should be wrapt up in the petticoat of a widow who had never wished to marry again; upon which the piper renounced all hope of completing the charm. I had need of a softer couch than Bruce had destined me, for so general was the tension of the nerves all over the body, although the pain of the spasms in the stomach did not suffer the others to be felt, that my whole left leg was covered with swelling and inflammation, arising from the unnatural action of the muscles, and I had to be carried about like a child. My right leg escaped better, the muscles there having less irritability, owing to its lame state. Your Grace may imagine the energy of pain in the nobler parts, when cramps in the extre-

mities, sufficient to produce such effects, were unnoticed by me during their existence. But enough of so disagreeable a subject.

"Respecting the portrait, I shall be equally proud and happy to sit for it, and hope it may be so executed as to be in some degree worthy of the preferment to which it is destined.* But neither my late golden hue, for I was covered with jaundice, nor my present silver complexion (looking much more like a spectre than a man), will present any idea of my quondam beef-eating physiognomy. I must wait till the *age of brass*, the true juridical bronze of my profession, shall again appear on my frontal. I hesitate a little about Raeburn, unless your Grace is quite determined. He has very much to do; works just now chiefly for cash, poor fellow, as he can have but a few years to make money; and has twice already made a very chowder-headed person of me. I should like much (always with your approbation) to try Allan, who is a man of real genius, and has made one or two glorious portraits, though his predilection is to the historical branch of the art. We did rather a handsome thing for him, considering that in Edinburgh we are neither very wealthy nor great amateurs. A hundred persons subscribed ten guineas

* The position in the Library at Bowhill, originally destined by the late Duke of Buccleuch for a portrait that never was executed, is now filled by that which Raeburn painted in 1808 for Constable, and which has been engraved for these memoirs.

a-piece to raffle* for his fine picture of the Circassian Chief selling slaves to the Turkish Pacha—a

* Three pictures were ultimately raffled for; and the following note, dated April the 1st, 1819, shows how keenly and practically Scott, almost in the crisis of his malady, could attend to the details of such a business:—

"*To J. G. Lockhart, Esq., Advocate, Edinburgh.*

. . . . . "I have been dreadfully ill since I wrote to you, but I think I have now got the turn fairly. It was quite time, for though the doctors say the disease is not dangerous, yet I could not have endured six days more agony. I have a summons from the ingenious Mr David Bridges to attend to my interests at his shop next Saturday, or send some qualified person to act on my behalf. I suppose that this mysterious missive alludes to the plan about Allan's pictures, and at any rate I hope you will act for me. I should think a raffle with dice would give more general satisfaction than a lottery You would be astonished what unhandsome suspicions well educated and sensible persons will take into their heads, when a selfish competition awakens the mean and evil passions of our nature. Let each subscriber throw the dice in person or by proxy, leaving out all who throw under a certain number, and let this be repeated till the number is so far reduced that the three who throw highest may hold the prizes. I have much to say to you, and should you spare me a day about the end of next week, I trust you will find me pretty *bobbish*. Always yours affectionately, W. S."

The Mr David Bridges here mentioned has occurred already.—See *ante*, Vol. V. p. 352. The jokers in Blackwood made him happy by dubbing him "The Director-General of the Fine Arts for Scotland."——He says the subscribers for the Allan-Raffle were not so numerous as Scott had supposed.

beautiful and highly poetical picture. There was another small picture added by way of second prize, and, what is curious enough, the only two peers on the list, Lord Wemyss and Lord Fife, both got prizes. Allan has made a sketch which I shall take to town with me when I can go, in hopes Lord Stafford, or some other picture-buyer, may fancy it, and order a picture. The subject is the murder of Archbishop Sharpe on Magus Moor, prodigiously well treated. The savage ferocity of the assasins, crowding one on another to strike at the old prelate on his knees—contrasted with the old man's figure—and that of his daughter endeavouring to interpose for his protection, and withheld by a ruffian of milder mood than his fellows:—the dogged fanatical severity of Rathillet's countenance, who remained on horseback, witnessing, with stern fanaticism, the murder he did not choose to be active in, lest it should be said that he struck out of private revenge—are all amazingly well combined in the sketch. I question if the artist can bring them out with equal spirit in the painting which he meditates.* Sketches give a sort of fire to the imagination of the spectator, who is apt to fancy a great deal more for himself than the pencil, in the finished picture, can possibly present to his eye afterwards. Constable has offered Allan three hundred pounds to make sketches for an edition of the Tales

* The fine picture which Allan executed is in the possession of Mr Lockhart of Milton-Lockhart, and has been well engraved.

of My Landlord, and other novels of that cycle, and says he will give him the same sum next year, so, from being pinched enough, this very deserving artist suddenly finds himself at his ease. He was long at Odessa with the Duke of Richelieu, and is a very entertaining person.

"I saw with great pleasure Wilkie's sketch of your Grace, and I think when I get to town I shall coax him out of a copy, to me invaluable. I hope, however, when you return, you will sit to Lawrence. We should have at least one picture of your Grace from the real good hand. Sooth to speak, I cannot say much for the juvenile representations at Bowhill and in the library at Dalkeith. Return, however, with the original features in good health, and we shall not worry you about portraits. The library at Bowhill will be a delightful room, and will be some consolation to me who must, I fear, lose for some time the comforts of the eating-room, and substitute panada and toast and water for the bonny haunch and buxom bottle of claret. Truth is, I must make great restrictions on my creature-comforts, at least till my stomach recovers its tone and ostrich-like capacity of digestion. Our spring here is slow, but not unfavourable: the country looking very well, and my plantings for the season quite completed. I have planted quite up two little glens, leading from the Aid-de-Camp's habitation up to the little loch, and expect the blessings of posterity for the shade

and shelter I shall leave where, God knows, I found none.

"It is doomed this letter is not to close without a request. I conclude your Grace has already heard from fifty applicants that the kirk of Middlebie is vacant, and I come forward as the fifty-first (always barring prior engagements and better claims) in behalf of George Thomson, a son of the minister of Melrose, being the grinder of my boys, and therefore deeply entitled to my gratitude and my good offices, as far as they can go. He is nearer Parson Abraham Adams than any living creature I ever saw—very learned, very religious, very simple, and extremely absent. His father, till very lately, had but a sort of half stipend, during the incumbency of a certain notorious Mr MacLagan, to whom he acted only as assistant. The poor devil was brought to the grindstone (having had the want of precaution to beget a large family), and became the very figure of a fellow who used to come upon the stage to sing 'Let us all be unhappy together.' This poor lad George was his saving angel, not only educating himself, but taking on him the education of two of his brothers, and maintaining them out of his own scanty pittance. He is a sensible lad, and by no means a bad preacher, a staunch Anti-Gallican, and orthodox in his principles. Should your Grace find yourself at liberty to give countenance to this very innocent and deserving creature, I need not say it

will add to the many favours you have conferred on me; but I hope the parishioners will have also occasion to say, 'Weel bobbit, George of Middlebie.' Your Grace's Aide-de-camp, who knows young Thomson well, will give you a better idea of him than I can do. He lost a leg by an accident in his boyhood, which spoiled as bold and fine looking a grenadier as ever charged bayonet against a Frenchman's throat. I think your Grace will not like him the worse for having a spice of military and loyal spirit about him. If you knew the poor fellow, your Grace would take uncommon interest in him, were it but for the odd mixture of sense and simplicity, and spirit and good morals. Somewhat too much of him.

"I conclude you will go to Mafra, Cintra, or some of these places, which Baretti describes so delightfully, to avoid the great heats, when the Palace de las Necessidades must become rather oppressive. By the by, though it were only for the credit of the name, I am happy to learn it has that useful English comfort, a water-closet. I suppose the armourer of the Liffey has already put it in complete repair. Your Grace sees the most secret passages respecting great men cannot be hidden from their friends. There is but little news here but death in the clan. Harden's sister is dead—a cruel blow to Lady Die,* who is upwards of eighty-five, and accustomed to no

* See *ante*, Vol. I. p. 342.

other society. Again, Mrs Frank Scott, his uncle's widow, is dead, unable to survive the loss of two fine young men in India, her sons, whose death closely followed each other. All this is sad work; but it is a wicked and melancholy world we live in. God bless you, my dear, dear Lord. Take great care of your health for the sake of all of us. You are the breath of our nostrils, useful to thousands, and to many of these thousands indispensable. I will write again very soon, when I can keep my breast longer to the desk without pain, for I am not yet without frequent relapses, when they souse me into scalding water without a moment's delay, where I lie, as my old *grieve* Tom Purdie said last night, being called to assist at the operation, 'like a *haulded saumon.*' I write a few lines to the Aid-de-Camp, but I am afraid of putting this letter beyond the bounds of Lord Montagu's frank. When I can do anything for your Grace here, you know I am most pleased and happy. Ever respectfully and affectionately your Grace's WALTER SCOTT."

"*To Captain Adam Fergusson, &c. &c. &c.*

"Abbotsford, April 16, 1819.

"My Dear Adam,

"Having only been able last night to finish a long letter to the Chief, I now add a few lines for the Aid-de-Camp. I have had the pleasure to hear

of you regularly from Jack,* who is very regular in steering this way when packets arrive; and I observe with great satisfaction that you think our good Duke's health is on the mending hand. Climate must operate as an alterative, and much cannot perhaps be expected from it at first. Besides, the great heat must be a serious drawback. But I hope you will try by and by to get away to Cintra, or some of those sequestered retreats where there are shades and cascades to cool the air. I have an idea the country there is eminently beautiful. I am afraid the Duke has not yet been able to visit Torres Vedras, but *you* must be meeting with things everywhere to put you in mind of former scenes. As for the Senhoras, I have little doubt that the difference betwixt your military hard fare and Florence's high sauces and jellies will make them think that time has rather improved an old friend than otherwise. Apropos of these ticklish subjects. I am a suitor to the Duke, with little expectation of success (for I know his engagements), for the kirk of Middlebie to George Thomson, the very Abraham Adams of Presbytery. If the Duke mentions him to you (not otherwise) pray lend him a lift. With a kirk and a manse the poor fellow might get a good farmer's daughter, and beget grenadiers for his Majesty's service. But as I said before, I daresay all St Hu-

* Captain John Fergusson, R. N.

bert's black pack are in full cry upon the living, and that he has little or no chance. It is something, however, to have tabled him, as better may come of it another day.

"All at Huntly Burn well and hearty, and most kind in their attentions during our late turmoils. Bauby* came over to offer her services as sick-nurse, and I have drunk scarce anything but delicious ginger-beer of Miss Bell's brewing, since my troubles commenced. They have been, to say the least, damnable; and I think you would hardly know me. When I crawl out on Sybil Grey, I am the very image of Death on the pale horse, lanthorn-jawed, decayed in flesh, stooping as if I meant to eat the pony's ears, and unable to go above a footpace. But although I have had, and must expect, frequent relapses, yet the attacks are more slight, and I trust I shall mend with the good weather. Spring sets in very pleasantly and in a settled fashion. I have planted a number of shrubs, &c. at Huntly Burn, and am snodding up the drive of the old farmhouse, enclosing the Toftfield, and making a good road from the parish road to your gate. This I tell you to animate you to pick up a few seeds both of forest trees, shrubs, and vegetables; we will rear them in the hot-house, and divide honourably. *Avis au lecteur.* I have been a good deal intrusted to the care

* Bauby — *i. e.* Barbara, was a kind old housekeeper of the Miss Fergussons.

of Sophia, who is an admirable sick-nurse. Mamma has been called to town by two important avocations. to get a cook — no joking matter — and to see Charles, who was but indifferent, but has recovered. You must have heard of the death of Joseph Hume, David's only son. Christ! what a calamity — just entering life with the fairest prospects — full of talent, and the heir of an old and considerable family — a fine career before him. All this he was one day, or rather one hour — or rather in the course of five minutes — so sudden was the death — and then a heap of earth. His disease is unknown; something about the heart, I believe; but it had no alarming appearance, nothing worse than a cold and sore throat, when convulsions came, and death ensued. It is a complete smash to poor David, who had just begun to hold his head up after his wife's death. But he bears it stoutly, and goes about his business as usual. A woful case. London is now out of the question with me; I have no prospect of being now able to stand the journey by sea or land; but the best is, I have no pressing business there. The Commie* takes charge of Walter's matters — cannot, you know, be in better hands; and Lord Melville talks of gazetting *quam primum*. I will write a long letter very soon, but my back, fingers,

* The Lord Chief Commissioner Adam.

and eyes ache with these three pages. All here send love and fraternity. Yours ever most truly,

WALTER SCOTT.

"P. S. — By the by, old Kennedy, the tinker, swam for his life at Jedburgh, and was only, by the sophisticated and timid evidence of a seceding doctor, who differed from all his brethren, saved from a well-deserved gibbet. He goes to botanize for fourteen years. Pray tell this to the Duke, for he was

'An old soldier of the Duke's,
And the Duke's old soldier.'

Six of his brethren, I am told, were in court, and kith and kin without end. I am sorry so many of the clan are left. The cause of quarrel with the murdered man was an old feud between two gipsey clans, the Kennedies and Irvings, which, about forty years since, gave rise to a desperate quarrel and battle on Hawick Green, in which the grandfathers of both Kennedy, and Irving whom he murdered, were engaged."

In the next of these letters there is allusion to a drama on the story of the Heart of Mid-Lothian, of which Mr Terry had transmitted the MS. to Abbotsford — and which ultimately proved very successful. Terry had, shortly before this time, become the acting manager of the Haymarket theatre.

" *To D. Terry, Esq., Haymarket, London.*

" Abbotsford, 18th April 1819,

" Dear Terry,

" I am able (though very weak) to answer your kind enquiries. I have thought of you often, and been on the point of writing or dictating a letter, but till very lately I could have had little to tell you of but distress and agony, with constant relapses into my unhappy malady, so that for weeks I seemed to lose rather than gain ground, all food nauseating on my stomach, and my clothes hanging about me like a potato-bogle,* with from five or six to ten hours of mortal pain every third day; latterly the fits have been much milder, and have at last given way to the hot bath without any use of opiates; an immense point gained, as they hurt my general health extremely. Conceive my having taken, in the course of six or seven hours, six grains of opium, three of hyoscyamus, near 200 drops of laudanum — and all without any sensible relief of the agony under which I laboured. My stomach is now getting confirmed, and I have great hopes the bout is over; it has been a dreadful set-to. I am sorry to hear Mrs Terry is complaining; you ought not to let her labour, neither at Abbotsford sketches nor at anything else,

* *Anglice* — Scarecrow.

but to study to keep her mind amused as much as possible. As for Walter, he is a shoot of an *Aik*,* and I have no fear of him; I hope he remembers Abbotsford and his soldier namesake.

"I send the MS. — I wish you had written for it earlier. My touching or even thinking of it was out of the question; my corrections would have smelled as cruelly of the cramp, as the Bishop of Grenada's homily did of the apoplexy. Indeed I hold myself inadequate to estimate those criticisms which rest on stage effect, having been of late very little of a play-going person. Would to Heaven these sheets could do for you what Rob Roy has done for Murray; he has absolutely netted upwards of £3000: to be sure the man who played the Bailie made a piece of acting equal to whatever has been seen in the profession. For my own part, I was actually electrified by the truth, spirit, and humour which he threw into the part. It was the living Nicol Jarvie: conceited, pragmatical, cautious, generous, proud of his connexion with Rob Roy, frightened for him at the same time, and yet extremely desirous to interfere with him as an adviser: The tone in which he seemed to give him up for a lost man after having provoked him into some burst of Highland violence —'Ah Rab, Rab!' was quite inimitable. I do assure you I never saw a thing better played. It is like it may be his only part, for no doubt the Pa-

* *Anglice* — an Oak.

tavinity and knowledge of the provincial character may have aided him much; but still he must be a wonderful fellow; and the houses he drew were tremendous.

"I am truly glad you are settled in London—'a rolling stone'—'the proverb is something musty:'* it is always difficult to begin a new profession; I could have wished you quartered nearer us, but we shall always hear of you. The becoming stage-manager at the Haymarket, I look upon as a great step; well executed, it cannot but lead to something of the same kind elsewhere. You must be aware of stumbling over a propensity which easily besets you from the habit of not having your time fully employed—I mean what the women very expressively call *dawdling*. Your motto must be *Hoc age*. Do instantly whatever is to be done, and take the hours of reflection or recreation after business, and never before it. When a regiment is under march, the rear is often thrown into confusion because the front do not move steadily and without interruption. It is the same thing with business. If that which is first in hand is not instantly, steadily, and regularly despatched, other things accumulate behind till affairs begin to press all at once, and no human brain can stand the confusion; pray mind this—it is one of your few weak points—ask Mrs Terry else. A habit of the mind it is which is very apt to beset men of

* *Hamlet, Act III. Scene 2.*

intellect and talent, especially when their time is not regularly filled up, but left at their own arrangement. But it is like the ivy round the oak, and ends by limiting, if it does not destroy, the power of manly and necessary exertion. I must love a man so well to whom I offer such a word of advice, that I will not apologize for it, but expect to hear you are become as regular as a Dutch clock—hours, quarters, minutes, all marked and appropriated. This is a great cast in life, and must be played with all skill and caution.

"We wish much to have a plan of the great bed, that we may hang up the tester. Mr Atkinson offered to have it altered or exchanged; but with the expense of land-carriage and risk of damage, it is not to be thought of. I enclose a letter to thank him for all his kindness. I should like to have the invoice when the things are shipped. I hope they will send them to Leith and not to Berwick. The plasterer has broke a pane in the armoury. I enclose a sheet with the size, the black lines being traced within the lead; and I add a rough drawing of the arms, which are those of my mother. I should like it replaced as soon as possible, for I will set the expense against the careless rascal's account.

"I have got a beautiful scarlet paper inlaid with gold (rather crimson than scarlet) in a present from India, which will hang the parlour to a T: But we shall want some articles from town to enable us to

take possession of the parlour — namely, a *carpet* — you mentioned a *wainscot pattern*, which would be delightful — item *grates* for said parlour and armoury — a plain and unexpensive pattern, resembling that in my room (which vents most admirably), and suited by half-dogs for burning wood. The sideboard and chairs you have mentioned. I see Mr Bullock (George's brother) advertises his museum for sale. I wonder if a good set of *real tilting* armour could be got cheap there. James Ballantyne got me one very handsome bright steel cuirassier of Queen Elizabeth's time, and two less perfect for £20 — dog cheap; they make a great figure in the armoury. Hangings, curtains, &c. I believe we shall get as well in Edinburgh as in London; it is in your joiner and cabinet work that your infinite superiority lies.

"Write to me if I can do aught about the play — though I fear not: much will depend on Dumbiedykes, in whom Liston will be strong. Sophia has been chiefly my nurse, as an indisposition of little Charles called Charlotte to town. She returned yesterday with him. All beg kind compliments to you and Mrs Terry and little Walter. I remain your very feeble but convalescent to command,

WALTER SCOTT.

"P. S. — We must not forget the case for the leaves of the table while out of use; without something of the kind, I am afraid they will be liable to

injury, which is a pity, as they are so very beautiful."*

The accounts of Scott's condition circulated in Edinburgh in the course of this April were so alarming, that I should not have thought of accepting his invitation to revisit Abbotsford, unless John Ballantyne had given me better tidings, about the end of the month. He informed me that his "illustrious friend" (for so both the Ballantynes usually spoke of him) was so much recovered as to have resumed his usual literary tasks, though with this difference, that he now, for the first time in his life, found it necessary to employ the hand of another. I have now before me a letter of the 8th April, in which Scott says to Constable, — "Yesterday I began to dictate, and did it easily and with comfort. This is a great point — but I must proceed by little and little; last night I had a slight return of the enemy — but baffled him;" and he again writes to the bookseller on the 11th — "John Ballantyne is here, and returns with copy, which my increasing strength permits me to hope I may now furnish regularly."

The *copy* (as MS. for the press is technically called) which Scott was thus dictating, was that of the Bride of Lammermoor; and his amanuenses were

* The Duke of Buccleuch gave Scott some old oak-roots from Drumlanrig, out of which a very beautiful set of dinner-tables were manufactured by Messrs Bullock.

William Laidlaw and John Ballantyne; of whom he preferred the latter, when he could be at Abbotsford, on account of the superior rapidity of his pen; and also because John kept his pen to the paper without interruption, and though with many an arch twinkle in his eyes, and now and then an audible smack of his lips, had resolution to work on like a well-trained clerk; whereas good Laidlaw entered with such keen zest into the interest of the story as it flowed from the author's lips, that he could not suppress exclamations of surprise and delight—"Gude keep us a'! —the like o' that!—eh sirs! eh sirs!"—and so forth—which did not promote despatch. I have often, however, in the sequel, heard both these secretaries describe the astonishment with which they were equally affected when Scott began this experiment. The affectionate Laidlaw beseeching him to stop dictating, when his audible suffering filled every pause, "Nay, Willie," he answered, "only see that the doors are fast. I would fain keep all the cry as well as all the wool to ourselves; but as to giving over work, that can only be when I am in woollen." John Ballantyne told me, that after the first day he always took care to have a dozen of pens made before he seated himself opposite to the sofa on which Scott lay, and that though he often turned himself on his pillow with a groan of torment, he usually continued the sentence in the same breath. But when dialogue of peculiar animation was in progress, spirit seemed

to triumph altogether over matter—he arose from his couch and walked up and down the room, raising and lowering his voice, and as it were acting the parts. It was in this fashion that Scott produced the far greater portion of The Bride of Lammermoor—the whole of the Legend of Montrose—and almost the whole of Ivanhoe. Yet, when his health was fairly re-established, he disdained to avail himself of the power of dictation, which he had thus put to the sharpest test, but resumed, and for many years resolutely adhered to, the old plan of writing everything with his own hand. When I once, sometime afterwards, expressed my surprise that he did not consult his ease, and spare his eyesight at all events, by occasionally dictating, he answered—"I should as soon think of getting into a sedan chair while I can use my legs."

On one of the envelopes in which a chapter of the Bride of Lammermoor reached the printer in the Canongate about this time (May 2, 1819), there is this note in the author's own handwriting:—

"Dear James,—These matters will need more than your usual carefulness. Look sharp—double sharp—my trust is constant in thee:—

'Tarry woo, tarry woo,
Tarry woo is ill to spin;
Card it weel, card it weel,
Card it weel ere ye begin.

When 'tis carded, row'd and spun,
Then the work is hafflins done;
But when woven, drest, and clean,
It may be cleading for a queen.'

So be it, — W. S."

But to return—I rode out to Abbotsford with John Ballantyne towards the end of the spring vacation, and though he had warned me of a sad change in Scott's appearance, it was far beyond what I had been led to anticipate. He had lost a great deal of flesh—his clothes hung loose about him—his countenance was meagre, haggard, and of the deadliest yellow of the jaundice—and his hair, which a few weeks before had been but slightly sprinkled with grey, was now almost literally snow-white. His eye, however, retained its fire unquenched; indeed it seemed to have gained in brilliancy from the new langour of the other features; and he received us with all the usual cordiality, and even with little perceptible diminishment in the sprightliness of his manner. He sat at the table while we dined, but partook only of some rice pudding; and after the cloth was drawn, while sipping his toast and water, pushed round the bottles in his old style, and talked with easy cheerfulness of the stout battle he had fought, and which he now seemed to consider as won.

" One day there was," he said, " when I certainly began to have great doubts whether the mischief was not getting at my mind—and I'll tell you how I

tried to reassure myself on that score. I was quite unfit for anything like original composition; but I thought if I could turn an old German ballad I had been reading into decent rhymes, I might dismiss my worst apprehensions—and you shall see what came of the experiment." He then desired his daughter Sophia to fetch the MS. of *The Noble Moringer*, as it had been taken down from his dictation, partly by her and partly by Mr Laidlaw, during one long and painful day while he lay in bed. He read it to us as it stood, and seeing that both Ballantyne and I were much pleased with the verses, he said he should copy them over,—make them a little "tighter about the joints,"—and give me them to be printed in the Edinburgh Annual Register for 1816,—to consult him about which volume had partly been the object of my visit; and this promise he redeemed before I left him.

The reading of this long ballad, however,—(it consists of forty-three stanzas)*—seemed to have exhausted him: he retired to his bed-room; and an hour or two after, when we were about to follow his example, his family were distressed by the well-known symptoms of another sharp recurrence of his affliction. A large dose of opium and the hot bath were immediately put in requisition. His good neighbour, Dr Scott of Darnlee, was sent for, and soon attended;

* See *Scott's Poetical Works* (Edition 1834), vol. vi. p. 343.

and in the course of three or four hours we learned that he was once more at ease. But I can never forget the groans which, during that space, his agony extorted from him. Well knowing the iron strength of his resolution, to find him confessing its extremity, by cries audible not only all over the house, but even to a considerable distance from it—(for Ballantyne and I, after he was put into his bath, walked forth to be out of the way, and heard him distinctly at the bowling-green)—it may be supposed that this was sufficiently alarming, even to my companion; how much more to me, who had never before listened to that voice, except in the gentle accents of kindness and merriment.

I told Ballantyne that I saw this was no time for my visit, and that I should start for Edinburgh again at an early hour—and begged he would make my apologies—in the propriety of which he acquiesced. But as I was dressing, about seven next morning, Scott himself tapped at my door, and entered, looking better I thought than at my arrival the day before. "Don't think of going," said he; "I feel hearty this morning, and if my devil does come back again, it won't be for three days at any rate. For the present, I want nothing to set me up except a good trot in the open air, to drive away the accursed vapours of the laudanum I was obliged to swallow last night. You have never seen Yarrow, and when I have finished a little job I have with Jocund

Johnny, we shall all take horse and make a day of it." When I said something about a ride of twenty miles being rather a bold experiment after such a night, he answered, that he had ridden more than forty, a week before, under similar circumstances, and felt nothing the worse. He added, that there was an election on foot, in consequence of the death of Sir John Riddell of Riddell, Member of Parliament for the Selkirk district of Burghs, and that the bad health and absence of the Duke of Buccleuch rendered it quite necessary that he should make exertions on this occasion. "In short," said he, laughing, "I have an errand which I shall perform—and as I must pass Newark, you had better not miss the opportunity of seeing it under so excellent a Cicerone as the old minstrel,

> 'Whose withered cheek and tresses grey
> Shall yet see many a better day.'"

About eleven o'clock, accordingly, he was mounted, by the help of Tom Purdie, upon a staunch, active cob, yclept *Sybil Grey*,—exactly such a creature as is described in Mr Dinmont's *Dumple*—while Ballantyne sprung into the saddle of noble *Old Mortality*, and we proceeded to the town of Selkirk, where Scott halted to do business at the Sheriff-Clerk's, and begged us to move onward at a gentle pace until he should overtake us. He came up by and by at a canter, and seemed in high glee with the

tidings he had heard about the canvass. And so we rode by Philiphaugh, Carterhaugh, Bowhill, and Newark, he pouring out all the way his picturesque anecdotes of former times—more especially of the fatal field where Montrose was finally overthrown by Leslie. He described the battle as vividly as if he had witnessed it; the passing of the Ettrick at daybreak by the Covenanting General's heavy cuirassiers, many of them old soldiers of Gustavus Adolphus, and the wild confusion of the Highland host when exposed to their charge on an extensive *haugh* as flat as a bowling-green. He drew us aside at *Slainmen's-lee*, to observe the green mound that marks the resting-place of the slaughtered royalists; and pointing to the apparently precipitous mountain, Minchmoor, over which Montrose and his few cavaliers escaped, mentioned that, rough as it seemed, his mother remembered passing it in her early days in a coach and six, on her way to a ball at Peebles—several footmen marching on either side of the carriage to prop it up, or drag it through bogs, as the case might require. He also gave us, with all the dramatic effect of one of his best chapters, the history of a worthy family who, inhabiting at the time of the battle a cottage on his own estate, had treated with particular kindness a young officer of Leslie's army quartered on them for a night or two before. When parting from them to join the troops, he took out a purse of gold, and told the goodwoman that he

had a presentiment he should not see another sun set, and in that case would wish his money to remain in her kind hands; but, if he should survive, he had no doubt she would restore it honestly. The young man returned mortally wounded, but lingered awhile under her roof, and finally bequeathed to her and hers his purse and his blessing. "Such," he said, "was the origin of the respectable lairds of ———, now my good neighbours."

The prime object of this expedition was to talk over the politics of Selkirk with one of the Duke of Buccleuch's great store-farmers, who, as the Sheriff had learned, possessed private influence with a doubtful baillie or deacon among the Souters. I forget the result, if ever I heard it. But next morning, having, as he assured us, enjoyed a good night in consequence of this ride, he invited us to accompany him on a similar errand across Bowden Moor, and up the Valley of the Ayle; and when we reached a particularly bleak and dreary point of that journey, he informed us that he perceived in the waste below a wreath of smoke, which was the appointed signal that a *wavering* Souter of some consequence had agreed to give him a personal interview where no Whiggish eyes were likely to observe them;—and so, leaving us on the road, he proceeded to thread his way westwards, across moor and bog, until we lost view of him. I think a couple of hours might have passed before he joined us again, which was, as had

been arranged, not far from the village of Lilliesleaf. In that place, too, he had some negotiation of the same sort to look after; and when he had finished it, he rode with us all round the ancient woods of Riddell, but would not go near the house; I suppose lest any of the afflicted family might still be there. Many were his lamentations over the catastrophe which had just befallen them. "They are," he said, "one of the most venerable races in the south of Scotland—they were here long before these glens had ever heard the name of Soulis or of Douglas—to say nothing of Buccleuch: they can show a Pope's bull of the tenth century, authorizing the then Riddell to marry a relation within the forbidden degrees. Here they have been for a thousand years at least; and now all the inheritance is to pass away, merely because one good worthy gentleman would not be contented to enjoy his horses, his hounds, and his bottle of claret, like thirty or forty predecessors, but must needs turn scientific agriculturist, take almost all his fair estate into his own hand, superintend for himself perhaps a hundred ploughs, and try every new nostrum that has been tabled by the quackish *improvers* of the time. And what makes the thing ten times more wonderful is, that he kept day-book and ledger, and all the rest of it, as accurately as if he had been a cheesemonger in the Grassmarket." Some of the most remarkable circumstances in Scott's own subsequent life have made me often recall this

conversation — with more wonder than he expressed about the ruin of the Riddells.

I remember he told us a world of stories, some tragical, some comical, about the old lairds of this time-honoured lineage; and among others, that of the seven Bibles and the seven bottles of ale, which he afterwards inserted in a note to *The Bride of Lammermoor*.* He was also full of anecdotes about

* "It was once the universal custom to place ale, wine, or some strong liquor, in the chamber of an honoured guest, to assuage his thirst should he feel any on awakening in the night, which, considering that the hospitality of that period often reached excess, was by no means unlikely. The author has met some instances of it in former days, and in old-fashioned families. It was, perhaps, no poetic fiction that records how

> 'My cummer and I lay down to sleep
> With two pint stoups at our bed feet;
> And aye when we waken'd we drank them dry:
> What think you o' my cummer and I?'

"It is a current story in Teviotdale, that in the house of an ancient family of distinction, much addicted to the Presbyterian cause, a Bible was always put into the sleeping apartment of the guests, along with a bottle of strong ale. On some occasion there was a meeting of clergymen in the vicinity of the castle, all of whom were invited to dinner by the worthy Baronet, and several abode all night. According to the fashion of the times, seven of the reverend guests were allotted to one large barrack-room, which was used on such occasions of extended hospitality. The butler took care that the divines were presented, according to custom, each with a Bible and a bottle of ale. But after a little consultation among themselves, they are said to have recalled the domestic as he was leaving the apartment. 'My friend,' said one of the venerable guests, 'you must know, when we meet together

a friend of his father's, a minister of Lilliesleaf, who reigned for two generations the most popular preacher in Tiviotdale; but I forget the orator's name. When the original of Saunders Fairford congratulated him in his latter days on the undiminished authority he still maintained—every kirk in the neighbourhood being left empty when it was known he was to mount the *tent* at any country sacrament—the shrewd divine answered, "Indeed, Mr Walter, I sometimes think it's vera surprising. There's aye a talk of this or that wonderfully gifted young man frae the college; but whenever I'm to be at the same *occasion* with ony o' them, I e'en mount the white horse in the Revelations, and he dings them a'."

Thus Scott amused himself and us as we jogged homewards: and it was the same the following day, when (no election matters pressing) he rode with us to the western peak of the Eildon hills, that he might show me the whole panorama of his Teviotdale, and expound the direction of the various passes by which the ancient forayers made their way into England,

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as brethren, the youngest minister reads aloud a portion of Scripture to the rest; — only one Bible, therefore, is necessary; take away the other six, and in their place bring six more bottles of ale.'

"This synod would have suited the 'hermit sage' of Johnson, who answered a pupil who enquired for the real road to happiness, with the celebrated line,

'Come, my lad, and drink some beer!'"

— See *Waverley Novels*, Edit. 1834, vol. xiv. p. 91.

and tell the names and the histories of many a monastic chapel and baronial peel, now mouldering in glens and dingles that escape the eye of the traveller on the highways. Among other objects on which he descanted with particular interest, were the ruins of the earliest residence of the Kerrs of Cessford, so often opposed in arms to his own chieftains of Branksome, and a desolate little kirk on the adjoining moor, where the Dukes of Roxburghe are still buried in the same vault with the hero who fell at Turnagain. Turning to the northward, he showed us the crags and tower of Smailholme, and behind it the shattered fragment of Erceldoune—and repeated some pretty stanzas ascribed to the last of the real wandering minstrels of this district, by name *Burn:*

"Sing Erceldoune, and Cowdenknowes,
Where Homes had ance commanding,
And Drygrange, wi' the milk-white ewes,
'Twixt Tweed and Leader standing.
The bird that flees through Redpath trees
And Gledswood banks each morrow,
May chaunt and sing — *sweet Leader's haughs*
And *Bonny howms of Yarrow.*

"But Minstrel Burn cannot assuage
His grief while life endureth,
To see the changes of this age
Which fleeting time procureth;
For mony a place stands in hard case,
Where blythe folks kent nae sorrow,
With Homes that dwelt on Leader side,
And Scotts that dwelt on Yarrow."

That night he had again an attack of his cramp, but not so serious as the former. Next morning he was again at work with Ballantyne at an early hour; and when I parted from him after breakfast, he spoke cheerfully of being soon in Edinburgh for the usual business of his Court. I left him, however, with dark prognostications; and the circumstances of this little visit to Abbotsford have no doubt dwelt on my mind the more distinctly, from my having observed and listened to him throughout under the painful feeling that it might very probably be my last.

On the 5th of May, he received the intelligence of the death of the Duke of Buccleuch, which had occurred at Lisbon on the 20th April; and next morning he wrote as follows to his Grace's brother: —

"*To the Lord Montagu, Ditton Park.*

"Abbotsford, 6th May 1819.

"My Dear Lord,

"I heard from Lord Melville, by yesterday's post, the calamitous news which your Lordship's very kind letter this moment confirmed, had it required confirmation. For this fortnight past, my hopes have been very faint indeed, and on Wednesday, when I had occasion to go to Yarrow, and my horse turned from habit to go up the avenue at Bowhill, I felt deeply impressed that it was a road I should seldom

travel for a long time at least. To your Lordship —let me add, to myself—this is an irreparable loss; for such a fund of excellent sense, high principle, and perfect honour, have been rarely combined in the same individual. To the country the inestimable loss will be soon felt, even by those who were insensible to his merits, or wished to detract from them, when he was amongst us. In my opinion he never recovered his domestic calamity. He wrote to me, a few days after that cruel event, a most affectionate and remarkable letter, explaining his own feelings, and while he begged that I would come to him, assuring me that I should find him the same he would be for the future years of his life. He kept his word; but I could see a grief of that calm and concentrated kind which claims the hours of solitude and of night for its empire, and gradually wastes the springs of life.

"Among the thousand painful feelings which this melancholy event had excited, I have sometimes thought of his distance from home. Yet this was done with the best intention, and upon the best advice, and was perhaps the sole chance which remained for re-establishment. It has pleased God that it has failed; but the best means were used under the best direction, and mere mortality can do no more. I am very anxious about the dear young ladies, whose lives were so much devoted to their father, and shall be extremely desirous of knowing how they are. The

Duchess has so much firmness of mind, and Lady M. so much affectionate prudence, that they will want no support that example and kindness can afford. To me the world seems a sort of waste without him. We had many joint objects, constant intercourse, and unreserved communication, so that through him and by him I took interest in many things altogether out of my own sphere, and it seems to me as if the horizon were narrowed and lowered around me. But God's will be done: it is all that brother or friend can or dare say.—I have reluctance to mention the trash which is going on here. Indeed, I think little is altered since I wrote to your Lordship fully, excepting that last night late, Chisholm* arrived at Abbotsford from Lithgow, recalled by the news which had somehow reached Edinburgh—as I suspect by some officiousness of . . . . . He left Lithgow in such a state that there is no doubt he will carry that burgh, unless Pringle† gets Selkirk. He is gone off this morning to try the possible and impossible to get the single vote which he wants, or to prevail on one person to stand neuter. It is possible he may succeed, though this event, when it becomes generally known, will be greatly against his efforts. I should care little more about the matter, were it not for young Walter,‡ and for the despite I feel at the suc-

* Mr Chisholm was the Tory candidate for the Selkirk burghs.

† Mr Pringle of Clifton, the Whig candidate.

‡ Walter Francis, the present Duke of Buccleuch.

cess of speculations which were formed on the probability of the event which has happened. Two sons of ******** came here yesterday, and with their father's philosophical spirit of self-accommodation, established themselves for the night. Betwixt them and Chisholm's noise, my head and my stomach suffered so much (under the necessity of drowning feelings which I could not express), that I had a return of the spasms, and I felt as if a phantasmagoria was going on around me. Quiet, and some indulgence of natural and solitary sorrow, have made me well. To-day I will ride up to Selkirk and see the magistrates, or the chief of them. It is necessary they should not think the cause deserted. If it is thought proper to suspend the works at Bowhill, perhaps the measure may be delayed till the decision of this matter.

"I am sure, my dear Lord, you will command me in all I can do. I have only to regret it is so little. But to show that my gratitude has survived my benefactor, would be the pride and delight of my life. I never thought it possible that a man could have loved another so much where the distance of rank was so very great. But why recur to things so painful? I pity poor Adam Fergusson, whose affections were so much engaged by the Duke's kindness, and who has with his gay temper a generous and feeling heart. The election we may lose, but not our own credit, and that of the family—that you may rest assured of. My best respects and warmest sympathy attend the

dear young ladies, and Lady Montagu. I shall be anxious to know how the Duchess-Dowager does under this great calamity. The poor boy—what a slippery world is before him, and how early a dangerous, because a splendid, lot is presented to him! But he has your personal protection. Believe me, with a deep participation in your present distress, your Lordship's most faithfully,

WALTER SCOTT."

Scott drew up for Ballantyne's newspaper of that week the brief character of Charles, Duke of Buccleuch, which has since been included in his Prose Miscellanies (vol. iv.); and the following letter accompanied a copy of it to Ditton Park:—

"*To the Lord Montagu, &c. &c. &c.*

"My Dear Lord,

"I send you the newspaper article under a different cover. I have studied so much to suppress my own feelings, and so to give a just, calm, and temperate view of the excellent subject of our present sorrow, such as I conceive might be drawn by one less partially devoted to him, that it has to my own eye a cold and lifeless resemblance of an original so dear to me. But I was writing to the public, and to a public less acquainted with him than a few years'

experience would have made them. Even his own tenantry were but just arrived at the true estimation of his character. I wrote, therefore, to insure credit and belief, in a tone greatly under my own feelings. I have ordered twenty-five copies to be put in a different shape, of which I will send your Lordship twenty. It has been a painful task, but I feel it was due from me. I am just favoured with your letter. I beg your Lordship will not write more frequently than you find quite convenient, for you must have now more than enough upon you. The arrangement respecting Boughton* is what I expected—the lifeless remains will be laid where the living thoughts had long been. I grieve that I shall not see the last honours, yet I hardly know how I could have gone through the scene.

" Nothing in the circumstances could have given me the satisfaction which I receive from your Lordship's purpose of visiting Scotland, and bringing down the dear young ladies, who unite so many and such affecting ties upon the regard and affection of every friend of the family. It will be a measure of the highest necessity for the political interest of the fa-

* Boughton, in Northamptonshire. This seat came into the possession of Henry, Duke of Buccleuch, by his marriage with the daughter and heiress of John, the last Duke of Montagu, who survived for many years her son Duke Charles. At Boughton, as the reader will see, Scott's early friend, the Duchess Harriet of Buccleuch, had been buried in 1814.

mily, and your Lordship will have an opportunity of hearing much information of importance, which really could not be made subject of writing. The extinction of fire on the hearths of this great house, would be putting out a public light, and a public beacon in the time of darkness and storms. Ever your most faithful W. S."

On the 11th of May Scott returned to Edinburgh, and was present next day at the opening of the Court of Session; when all who saw him were as much struck as I had been at Abbotsford with the lamentable change his illness had produced in his appearance. He was unable to persist in attendance at the Clerk's table — for several weeks afterwards I think he seldom if ever attempted it; — and I well remember that, when the Third Series of the Tales of My Landlord at length came out (which was on the 10th of June), he was known to be confined to bed, and the book was received amidst the deep general impression that we should see no more of that parentage. On the 13th he wrote thus to Captain Fergusson, who had arrived in London with the remains of the Duke of Buccleuch: —

"*To Captain Adam Fergusson, &c. &c. Montagu House, Whitehall.*

"My dear Adam, I am sorry to say I have had

another eight days' visit of my disorder, which has confined me chiefly to my bed. It is not attended with so much acute pain as in spring, but with much sickness and weakness. It will perhaps shade off into a mild chronic complaint—if it returns frequently with the same violence, I shall break up by degrees, and follow my dear Chief. I do not mean that there is the least cause for immediate apprehension, but only that the constitution must be injured at last, as well by the modes of cure, or rather of relief, as by the pain. My digestion as well as my appetite are for the present quite gone—a change from former days of Leith and Newhaven parties. I thank God I can look at this possibility without much anxiety, and without a shadow of fear.

"Will you, if your time serves, undertake two little commissions for me? One respects a kind promise of Lord Montagu to put George Thomson's name on a list for kirk preferment. I don't like to trouble him with letters—he must be overwhelmed with business, and has his dear brother's punctuality in replying even to those which require none. I would fain have that Scottish Abr. Adams provided for if possible. My other request is, that you will, if you can, see Terry, and ask him what is doing about my dining-room chairs, and especially about the carpet, for I shall not without them have the use of what Slender calls 'mine own great parlour' this season. I should write to him, but am really unable.

I hope you will soon come down—a sight of you would do me good at the worst turn I have yet had. The Baronet* is very kind, and comes and sits by me. Everybody likes the Regalia, and I have heard of no one grudging their *hog*†—but you must get something better. I have been writing to the Commie‡ about this. He has been inexpressibly kind in Walter's matter, and the Duke of York has promised an early commission. When you see our friend, you can talk over this, and may perhaps save him the trouble of writing particular directions what further is to be done. Iago's rule, I suppose—'put money in thy purse.' I wish in passing you would ask how the ladies are in Piccadilly. Yours ever,

W. SCOTT."

The Bride of Lammermoor, and the Legend of Montrose, would have been read with indulgence had they needed it; for the painful circumstances under which they must have been produced were known wherever an English newspaper made its way; but I believe that, except in numerous typical errors, which sprung of necessity from the author's inability to correct any proof-sheets, no one ever affected to perceive in either tale the slightest symptom of his malady. Dugald Dalgetty was placed by acclamation in the same rank with Bailie Jarvie—a conception equally

* Mr William Clerk. † A shilling.

‡ The Lord Chief-Commissioner Adam.

new, just, and humorous, and worked out in all the details, as if it had formed the luxurious entertainment of a chair as easy as was ever shaken by Rabelais; and though the character of Montrose himself seemed hardly to have been treated so fully as the subject merited, the accustomed rapidity of the novelist's execution would have been enough to account for any such defect. Of Caleb Balderstone—(the hero of one of the many ludicrous delineations which he owed to the late Lord Haddington, a man of rare pleasantry, and one of the best tellers of old Scotch stories that I ever heard)—I cannot say that the general opinion was then, nor do believe it ever since has been, very favourable. It was pronounced at the time, by more than one critic, a mere caricature; and though Scott himself would never in after days admit this censure to be just, he allowed that "he might have sprinkled rather too much parsley over his chicken." But even that blemish, for I grant that I think it a serious one, could not disturb the profound interest and pathos of the Bride of Lammermoor—to my fancy the most pure and powerful of all the tragedies that Scott ever penned. The reader will be well pleased, however, to have, in place of any critical observations on this work, the following particulars of its composition from the notes which its printer dictated when stretched on the bed from which he well knew he was never to rise.

"The book" (says James Ballantyne) "was not only written, but published, before Mr Scott was able to rise from his bed; and he assured me, that when it was first put into his hands in a complete shape, he did not recollect one single incident, character, or conversation it contained! He did not desire me to understand, nor did I understand, that his illness had erased from his memory the original incidents of the story, with which he had been acquainted from his boyhood. These remained rooted where they had ever been; or, to speak more explicitly, he remembered the general facts of the existence of the father and mother, of the son and daughter, of the rival lovers, of the compulsory marriage, and the attack made by the bride upon the hapless bridegroom, with the general catastrophe of the whole. All these things he recollected, just as he did before he took to his bed; but he literally recollected nothing else: — not a single character woven by the romancer, not one of the many scenes and points of humour, nor anything with which he was connected as the writer of the work. 'For a long time,' he said, 'I felt myself very uneasy in the course of my reading, lest I should be startled by meeting something altogether glaring and fantastic. However, I recollected that you had been the printer, and I felt sure that you would not have permitted anything of this sort to pass.' 'Well,' I said, 'upon the whole, how did you like it?' 'Why,' he said,

'as a whole, I felt it monstrous gross and grotesque; but still the worst of it made me laugh, and I trusted the good-natured public would not be less indulgent.' I do not think I ever ventured to lead to the discussion of this singular phenomenon again; but you may depend upon it, that what I have now said is as distinctly reported as if it had been taken down in short-hand at the moment; I should not otherwise have ventured to allude to the matter at all. I believe you will agree with me in thinking that the history of the human mind contains nothing more wonderful."

Soon after Scott re-appeared in the Parliament-house, he came down one Saturday to the vaulted chambers below, where the Advocates' Library was then kept, to attend a meeting of the Faculty, and as the assembly was breaking up he asked me to walk home with him, taking Ballantyne's printing office in our way. He moved languidly, and said, if he were to stay in town many days, he must send for Sybil Grey; but his conversation was heart-whole; and, in particular, he laughed till, despite his weakness, the stick was flourishing in his hand, over the following almost incredible specimen of that most absurd personage the late Earl of Buchan.

Hearing one morning shortly before this time, that Scott was actually *in extremis*, the Earl proceeded to Castle Street, and found the knocker tied rise. He then descended to the door in the area, and

was there received by honest Peter Mathieson, whose face seemed to confirm the woful tidings, for in truth his master was ill enough. Peter told his Lordship that he had the strictest orders to admit no visiter; but the Earl would take no denial, pushed the bashful coachman aside, and elbowed his way up stairs to the door of Scott's bedchamber. He had his fingers upon the handle before Peter could give warning to Miss Scott; and when she appeared to remonstrate against such an intrusion, he patted her on the head like a child, and persisted in his purpose of entering the sick-room so strenuously, that the young lady found it necessary to bid Peter see the Earl down stairs again, at whatever damage to his dignity. Peter accordingly, after trying all his eloquence in vain, gave the tottering, bustling, old, meddlesome coxcomb a single shove, — as respectful, doubt not, as a shove can ever be, — and he accepted that hint, and made a rapid exit. Scott, meanwhile, had heard the confusion, and at length it was explained to him; when, fearing that Peter's gripe might have injured Lord Buchan's feeble person, he desired James Ballantyne, who had been sitting by his bed, to follow the old man home — make him comprehend, if he could, that the family were in such bewilderment of alarm, that the ordinary rules of civility were out of the question — and, in fine, enquire what had been the object of his lordship's intended visit. James proceeded forthwith to the Earl's house in George

Street, and found him strutting about his library in a towering indignation. Ballantyne's elaborate demonstrations of respect, however, by degrees softened him, and he condescended to explain himself. "I wished," said he, "to embrace Walter Scott before he died, and inform him that I had long considered it as a satisfactory circumstance that he and I were destined to rest together in the same place of sepulture. The principal thing, however, was to relieve his mind as to the arrangements of his funeral — to show him a plan which I had prepared for the procession — and, in a word, to assure him that I took upon myself the whole conduct of the ceremonial at Dryburgh." He then exhibited to Ballantyne a formal programme, in which, as may be supposed, the predominant feature was not Walter Scott, but David Earl of Buchan. It had been settled, *inter alia*, that the said Earl was to pronounce an eulogium over the grave, after the fashion of French Academicians in the *Père la Chaise*.

And this silliest and vainest of busy-bodies was the elder brother of Thomas and Henry Erskine! But the story is well known of his boasting one day to the late Duchess of Gordon of the extraordinary talents of his family — when her unscrupulous Grace asked him, very coolly, whether the wit had not come by the mother, and been all settled on the younger branches?

Scott, as his letters to be quoted presently will

show, had several more attacks of his disorder, and some very severe ones, during the autumn of 1819; nor, indeed, had it quite disappeared until about Christmas. But from the time of his return to Abbotsford in July, when he adopted the system of treatment recommended by a skilful physician (Dr Dick), who had had large experience in maladies of this kind during his Indian life, the seizures gradually became less violent, and his confidence that he was ultimately to baffle the enemy remained unshaken.

As I had no opportunity of seeing him again until he was almost entirely re-established, I shall leave the progress of his restoration to be collected from his correspondence. But I must not forget to set down what his daughter Sophia afterwards told me of his conduct upon one night in June, when he really did despair of himself. He then called his children about his bed, and took leave of them with solemn tenderness. After giving them, one by one, such advice as suited their years and characters, he added — "For myself, my dears, I am unconscious of ever having done any man an injury, or omitted any fair opportunity of doing any man a benefit. I well know that no human life can appear otherwise than weak and filthy in the eyes of God: but I rely on the merits and intercession of our Redeemer." He then laid his hand on their heads, and said — "God bless you! Live so that you may all hope to

meet each other in a better place hereafter. And now leave me, that I may turn my face to the wall." They obeyed him; but he presently fell into a deep sleep; and when he awoke from it after many hours, the crisis of extreme danger was felt by himself, and pronounced by his physician, to have been overcome.

CHAPTER XLV.

Gradual re-establishment of Scott's health — Ivanhoe in progress — His son Walter joins the Eighteenth Regiment of Hussars — Scott's Correspondence with his Son — Miscellaneous Letters to Mrs Maclean Clephane, M. W. Hartstonge, J. G. Lockhart, John Ballantyne, John Richardson, Miss Edgeworth, Lord Montagu, &c. — Abbotsford visited by Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg — Death of Mrs William Erskine.

1819.

BEFORE Scott left Edinburgh, on the 12th of July, he had not only concluded his bargain with Constable for another novel, but, as will appear from some of his letters, made considerable progress in the dictation of Ivanhoe.

That he already felt great confidence on the score

of his health, may be inferred from his allowing his son Walter, about the middle of the month, to join the 18th Regiment of Hussars, in which he had, shortly before, received his commission as Cornet.

Scott's letters to his son, the first of his family that left the house, will merit henceforth a good deal of the reader's attention. Walter was, when he thus quitted Abbotsford to try his chances in the active world, only in the eighteenth year of his age; and the fashion of education in Scotland is such, that he had scarcely ever slept a night under a different roof from his parents, until this separation occurred. He had been treated from his cradle with all the indulgence that a man of sense can ever permit himself to show to any of his children; and for several years he had now been his father's daily companion in all his out-of-doors occupations and amusements. The parting was a painful one; but Scott's ambition centered in the heir of his name, and instead of fruitless pinings and lamentings, he henceforth made it his constant business to keep up such a frank correspondence with the young man as might enable himself to exert over him, when at a distance, the gentle influence of kindness, experience, and wisdom. The series of his letters to his son is, in my opinion, by far the most interesting and valuable, as respects the personal character and temper of the writer. It will easily be supposed that, as the young officer entered

fully into his father's generous views of what their correspondence ought to be, and detailed every little incident of his new career with the same easy confidence as if he had been writing to a friend or elder brother not very widely differing from himself in standing, the answers abound with opinions on subjects with which I have no right to occupy or entertain my readers; but I shall introduce in the prosecution of this work, as many specimens of Scott's paternal advice as I can hope to render generally intelligible without indelicate explanations — and more especially such as may prove serviceable to other young persons when first embarking under their own pilotage upon the sea of life. Scott's manly kindness to his boy, whether he is expressing approbation or censure of his conduct, can require no pointing out; and his practical wisdom was of that liberal order, based on such comprehensive views of man and the world, that I am persuaded it will often be found available to the circumstances of their own various cases, by young men of whatever station or profession.

I shall, nevertheless, adhere as usual to the chronological order; and one or two miscellaneous letters must accordingly precede the first article of his correspondence with the Cornet. He alludes, however, to the youth's departure in the following —

" *To Mrs Maclean Clephane of Torloisk.*

" Abbotsford, July 15th, 1819.

" Dear Mrs Clephane,

" Nothing could give me more pleasure than to hear you are well, and thinking of looking this way. You will find all my things in very different order from when you were here last, and plenty of room for matron and miss, man and maid. We have no engagements, except to Newton Don about the 20th August — if we be alive — no unreasonable proviso in so long an engagement. My health, however, seems in a fair way of being perfectly restored. It is a joke to talk of any other remedy than that forceful but most unpleasant one — *calomel.* I cannot say I ever felt advantage from anything else; and I am perfectly satisfied that, used as an alterative, and taken in very small quantities for a long time, it must correct all the inaccuracies of the biliary organs. At least it has done so in my case more radically than I could have believed possible. I have intermitted the regime for some days, but begin a new course next week for precaution. Dr Dick, of the East-India Company's service, has put me on this course of cure, and says he never knew it fail unless when the liver was irreparably injured. I believe I shall go to Carlsbad next year. If I must go to a watering-place, I should like one where I might hope to see and learn something new myself,

instead of being hunted down by some of the confounded lion-catchers who haunt English spas. I have not the art of being savage to those people, though few are more annoyed by them. I always think of Snug the Joiner—

> ' ——— If I should as lion *come in strife*
> Into such place, 'twere pity on my life.'

" I have been delayed in answering your kind letter by Walter's departure from us to join his regiment, the 18th Dragoons. He has chosen a profession for which he is well suited, being of a calm but remarkably firm temper — fond of mathematics, engineering, and all sorts of calculation — clear-headed, and good-natured. When you add to this a good person and good manners, with great dexterity in horsemanship and all athletic exercises, and a strong constitution, one hopes you have the grounds of a good soldier. My own selfish wish would have been that he should have followed the law; but he really had no vocation that way, wanting the acuteness and liveliness of intellect indispensable to making a figure in that profession. So I am satisfied all is for the best, only I shall miss my gamekeeper and companion in my rides and walks. But so it was, is, and must be — the young must part from the nest, and learn to wing their own way against the storm.

" I beg my best and kindest compliments to Lady

Compton. Stooping to write hurts me, or I would have sent her a few lines. As I shall be stationary here for all this season, I shall not see her, perhaps, for long enough. Mrs Scott and the girls join in best love, and I am ever, dear Mrs Clephane, your faithful and most obedient servant, WALTER SCOTT."

I have had some hesitation about introducing the next letter — which refers to the then recent publication of a sort of mock-tour in Scotland, entitled "Peter's Letters to his Kinsfolk." Nobody but a very young and a very thoughtless person could have dreamt of putting forth such a book; yet the Epistles of the imaginary Dr Morris have been so often denounced as a mere string of libels, that I think it fair to show how much more leniently Scott judged of them at the time. Moreover, his letter is a good specimen of the liberal courtesy with which, on all occasions, he treated the humblest aspirants in literature. Since I have alluded to Peter's Letters at all, I may as well take the opportunity of adding that they were not wholly the work of one hand.

"*To J. G. Lockhart, Esq., Carnbroe House, Hollytown.*

"Abbotsford, July 19th, 1819.

"My Dear Sir,

"*Distinguendum est.* When I receive a book

ex dono of the author, in the general case I offer my thanks with all haste before I cut a leaf, lest peradventure I should feel more awkward in doing so afterwards, when they must not only be tendered for the well printed volumes themselves, and the attention which sent them my way, but moreover for the supposed pleasure I have received from the contents. But with respect to the learned Dr Morris, the case is totally different, and I formed the immediate resolution not to say a word about that gentleman's labours without having read them at least twice over—a pleasant task, which has been interrupted partly by my being obliged to go down the country, partly by an invasion of the Southron, in the persons of Sir John Shelley, famous on the turf, and his lady. I wish Dr Morris had been of the party, chiefly for the benefit of a little Newmarket man, called Cousins, whose whole ideas, similes, illustrations, &c. were derived from the course and training stable. He was perfectly good-humoured, and I have not laughed more this many a day.

"I think the Doctor has got over his ground admirably;—only the general turn of the book is perhaps too favourable, both to the state of our public society, and of individual character:

> 'His fools have their follies so lost in a crowd
> Of virtues and feelings, that folly grows proud.'*

* Goldsmith's *Retaliation*.

But it was, in every point of view, right to take this more favourable tone, and to throw a Claude Lorraine tint over our northern landscape. We cannot bear the actual bare truth, either in conversation, or that which approaches nearest to conversation, in a work like the Doctor's, published within the circle to which it refers.

"For the rest, the Doctor has fully maintained his high character for force of expression, both serious and comic, and for acuteness of observation—*rem acu tetigit*—and his scalpel has not been idle, though his lenient hand has cut sharp and clean, and poured balm into the wound. What an acquisition it would have been to our general information to have had such a work written, I do not say fifty, but even five-and-twenty years ago; and how much of grave and gay might then have been preserved, as it were, in amber, which have now mouldered away. When I think that at an age not much younger than yours I knew Black, Ferguson, Robertson, Erskine, Adam Smith, John Home, &c. &c., and at least saw Burns, I can appreciate better than any one the value of a work which, like this, would have handed them down to posterity in their living colours. Dr Morris ought, like Nourjahad, to revive every half century, to record the fleeting manners of the age, and the interesting features of those who will be only known to posterity by their works. If I am very partial to the Doctor, which I am not inclined to deny, re-

member I have been bribed by his kind and delicate account of his visit to Abbotsford. Like old Cumberland, or like my own grey cat, I will e'en purr and put up my back, and enjoy his kind flattery, even when I know it goes beyond my merits.

"I wish you would come and spend a few days here, while this delightful weather lasts. I am now so well as quite to enjoy the society of my friends, instead of the woful pickle in which I was in spring, when you last favoured me. It was, however, *dignus vindice nodus*, for no less a deity descended to my aid than the potent Mercury himself, in the shape of calomel, which I have been obliged to take daily, though in small quantities, for these two months past. Notwithstanding the inconveniences of this remedy, I thrive upon it most marvellously, having recovered both sleep and appetite; so when you incline to come this way, you will find me looking pretty *bobbishly*. —Yours very truly, WALTER SCOTT."

On the same day, Scott wrote as follows, to John Ballantyne, who had started for London, on his route to Paris in quest of articles for next winter's auction-room—and whose good offices he was anxious to engage on behalf of the Cornet, in case they should happen to be in the metropolis at the same time:—

"*To Mr John Ballantyne, care of Messrs Longman & Co., London.*

"Abbotsford, July 19th, 1819.

"Dear John,

"I have only to say, respecting matters here, that they are all going on quietly. The first volume is very nearly finished, and the whole will be out in the first or second week of September. It will be well if you can report yourself in Britain by that time at farthest, as something must be done on the back of this same Ivanhoe.

"Walter left us on Wednesday night, and will be in town by the time this reaches you, looking, I fancy, very like a cow in a fremd loaning.* He will be heard of at Miss Dumergue's. Pray look after him, and help him about his purchases.

"I hope you will be so successful in your foreign journey as to diddle the Edinburgh folk out of some cash this winter. But don't forget September, if you wish to partake the advantages thereof.

"I wish you would see what good reprints of old books are come out this year at Triphook's, and send me a note of them.—Yours very truly,

W. SCOTT."

* *Anglice* — a strange pasture.

John Ballantyne found the Cornet in London, and did for him what his father had requested.

"*To Mr John Ballantyne.*

"Abbotsford, July 26, 1819.

"Dear John,

"I have yours with the news of Walter's rattle-traps, which are abominably extravagant. But there is no help for it but submission. The things seem all such as cannot well be wanted. How the devil they mount them to such a price, the tailors best know. They say it takes *nine* tailors to make a man — apparently, one is sufficient to ruin him. We shall rub through here well enough, though James is rather glumpy and dumpy — chiefly, I believe, because his child is unwell. If you can make any more money for me in London, good and well. I have no spare cash till Ivanhoe comes forth. — Yours truly,

W. SCOTT.

"P. S. — Enclosed are sundry letters of introduction for the *ci-devant* Laird of Gilnockie."

"*To Miss Edgeworth of Edgeworthstown.*

"Abbotsford, July 21, 1819.

"My Dear Miss Edgeworth,

"When this shall happen to reach your hands,

it will be accompanied by a second edition of Walter Scott, a *tall* copy, as collectors say, and bound in Turkey leather, garnished with all sorts of fur and frippery—not quite so well *lettered*, however, as the old and vamped original edition. In other, and more intelligible phrase, the tall Cornet of Hussars, whom this will introduce to you, is my eldest son, who is now just leaving me to join his regiment in Ireland. I have charged him, and he is himself sufficiently anxious, to avoid no opportunity of making your acquaintance, as to be known to the good and the wise is by far the best privilege he can derive from my connexion with literature. I have always felt the value of having access to persons of talent and genius to be the best part of a literary man's prerogative, and you will not wonder, I am sure, that I should be desirous this youngster should have a share of the same benefit.

"I have had dreadful bad health for many months past, and have endured more pain than I thought was consistent with life. But the thread, though frail in some respects, is tough in others; and here am I with renewed health, and a fair prospect of regaining my strength, much exhausted by such a train of suffering.

"I do not know when this will reach you, my son's motions being uncertain. But, find you where or when it will, it comes, dear Miss Edgeworth, from the sincere admirer of your genius, and of the

patriotic and excellent manner in which it has always been exerted. In which character I subscribe myself ever yours truly, WALTER SCOTT."

I believe, at the time when the foregoing letter was written, Scott and Miss Edgeworth had never met. The next was addressed to a gentleman whose acquaintance the poet had formed when collecting materials for his edition of Swift. On that occasion Mr Hartstonge was of great service to Scott—and he appears to have paid him soon afterwards a visit at Abbotsford. Mr Hartstonge was an amiable and kind-hearted man, and enthusiastically devoted to literature; but his own poetical talents were undoubtedly of the sort that finds little favour either with gods or columns. He seems to have written shortly before this time to enquire about his old acquaintance's health.

"*To Matthew Weld Hartstonge, Esq., Molesworth Street, Dublin.*

"Abbotsford, July 21, 1819.

"My Dear Sir,

. . . . . "Fortunately at present my system is pretty strong. In the mean while my family are beginning to get forwards. Walter—(you remember my wading into Cauldshields loch to save his little frigate from wreck)—is now a Cornet of six feet

two inches in your Irish 18th Hussars; the regiment is now at Cork, and will probably be next removed to Dublin, so you will see your old friend with a new face; be-furred, be-feathered, and be-whiskered in the highest military *ton*. I have desired him to call upon you, should he get to Dublin on leave, or come there upon duty. I miss him here very much, for he was my companion, gamekeeper, &c. &c., and when one loses one's own health and strength, there are few things so pleasant as to see a son enjoying both in the vigour of hope and promise. Think of this, my good friend, and as you have kind affections to make some good girl happy, settle yourself in life while you are young, and lay up by so doing, a stock of domestic happiness, against age or bodily decay. There are many good things in life, whatever satirists and misanthropes may say to the contrary, but probably the best of all, next to a conscience void of offence (without which, by the by, they can hardly exist), are the quiet exercise and enjoyment of the social feelings, in which we are at once happy ourselves, and the cause of happiness to them who are dearest to us.

" I have no news to send you from hence. The addition to my house is completed with battlement and bartisan, but the old cottage remains hidden among creepers, until I shall have leisure—*i.e.* time and money—to build the rest of my mansion—which I will not do hastily, as the present is amply

sufficient for accommodation. Adieu, my dear sir; never reckon the degree of my regard by the regularity of my correspondence, for besides the vile diseases of laziness and procrastination, which have always beset me, I have had of late both pain and languor sufficient to justify my silence. Believe me, however, always most truly yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

The first letter the young Cornet received from his father after mounting his "rattle-traps" was the following:—

"*To Cornet Walter Scott, 18th Hussars, Cork.*

"Abbotsford, Aug. 1, 1819.

"Dear Walter,

"I was glad to find you got safe to the hospitable quarters of Piccadilly, and were put on the way of achieving your business well and expeditiously. You would receive a packet of introductory letters by John Ballantyne, to whom I addressed them.

"I had a very kind letter two days ago from your Colonel.* Had I got it sooner it would have saved some expense in London, but there is no help for it now. As you are very fully provided with all these

* The then commandant of the 18th Hussars was Lieut.-Colonel the Hon. Henry Murray, brother to the Earl of Mansfield.

appointments, you must be particular in taking care of them, otherwise the expense of replacing them will be a great burden. Colonel Murray seems disposed to show you much attention. He is, I am told, rather a reserved man, which indeed is the manner of his family. You will, therefore, be the more attentive to what he says, as well as to answer all advances he may make to you with cordiality and frankness; for if you be shy on the one hand, and he reserved on the other, you cannot have the benefit of his advice, which I hope and wish you may gain. I shall be guided by his opinion respecting your allowance: he stipulates that you shall have only two horses (not to be changed without his consent), and on no account keep a gig. You know of old how I detest that mania of driving wheel-barrows up and down, when a man has a handsome horse and can ride him. They are both foolish and expensive things, and, in my opinion, are only fit for English bagmen—therefore gig it not, I pray you.

"In buying your horses you will be very cautious. I see Colonel Murray has delicacy about assisting you directly in the matter—for he says very truly that some gentlemen make a sort of traffic in horse-flesh—from which his duty and inclination equally lead him to steer clear. But he will take care that you don't buy any that are unfit for service, as in the common course they must be approved by the commandant as *chargers*. Besides which, he will pro-

bably give you some private hints, of which avail yourself, as there is every chance of your needing much advice in this business. Two things I preach on my own experience:—1*st*, Never to buy an aged horse, however showy. He must have done work, and, at any rate, will be unserviceable in a few years. 2*dly*, To buy rather when the horse is something low in condition, that you may the better see all his points. Six years is the oldest at which I would purchase. You will run risk of being jockeyed by knowing gentlemen of your own corps parting with their *experienced* chargers to *oblige* you. Take care of this. Any good-tempered horse learns the dragoon duty in wonderfully short time, and you are rider enough not to want one quite broke in. Look well about you, and out into the country. Excellent horses are bred all through Munster, and better have a clever young one than an old regimental brute foundered by repeated charges and bolts. If you see a brother-officer's horse that pleases you much, and seems reasonable, look particularly how he stands on his forelegs, and for that purpose see him in the stable. If he shifts and shakes a little, have nothing to say to him. This is the best I can advise, not doubting you will be handsomely excised after all. The officer who leaves his corps may be disposing of good horses, and perhaps selling reasonable. One who continues will not, at least should not, part with a good horse without some great advantage.

"You will remain at Cork till you have learned your regimental duty, and then probably be despatched to some outquarter. I need not say how anxious I am that you should keep up your languages, mathematics, and other studies. To have lost that which you already in some degree possess—and that which we don't practise we soon forget—would be a subject of unceasing regret to you hereafter. You have good introductions, and don't neglect to avail yourself of them. Something in this respect your name may do for you—a fair advantage, if used with discretion and propriety. By the way, I suspect you did not call on John Richardson.

"The girls were very dull after you left us; indeed the night you went away, Anne had hysterics, which lasted some time. Charles also was down in the mouth, and papa and mamma a little grave and dejected. I would not have you think yourself of too great importance neither, for the greatest personages are not always long missed, and to make a bit of a parody,

'Down falls the rain, up gets the sun,
Just as if Walter were not gone.'

We comfort ourselves with the hopes that you are to be happy in the occupation you have chosen, and in your new society. Let me know if there are any well-informed men among them, though I don't expect you to find out that for some time. Be civil to

all, till you can by degrees find out who are really best deserving.

"I enclose a letter from Sophia, which doubtless contains all the news. St Boswell's Fair rained miserably, and disappointed the misses. The weather has since been delightful, and harvest advances fast. All here goes its old round—the habits of age do not greatly change, though those of youth do. Mamma has been quite well, and so have I—but I still take calomel. I was obliged to drink some claret with Sir A. Don, Sir John Shelley, and a funny little Newmarket quizzy, called Cousins, whom they brought here with them the other day, but I was not the worse. I wish you had Sir J. S. at your elbow when you are buying your horses—he is a very knowing man on the turf. I like his lady very much. She is perfectly feminine in her manners, has good sense, and plays divinely on the harp; besides all which, she shoots wild boars, and is the boldest horsewoman I ever saw. I saw her at Paris ride like a lapwing, in the midst of all the aide-de-camps and suite of the Duke of Wellington.

"Write what your horses come to, &c. Your outfit will be an expensive matter; but once settled, it will be fairly launching you into life in the way you wished, and I trust you will see the necessity of prudence and a gentlemanlike economy, which consists chiefly in refusing oneself trifling indulgences

until we can easily pay for them. Once more, I beg you to be attentive to Colonel Murray and to his lady. I hear of a disease among the moorfowl. I suppose they are dying for grief at your departure. Ever, my dear boy, your affectionate father,

WALTER SCOTT."

"*To the Same.*

"7th August 1819.

"Dear Walter,

". . . . I shall be curious to know how you like your brother-officers, and how you dispose of your time. The drills and riding-school will, of course, occupy much of your mornings for some time. I trust, however, you will keep in view drawing, languages, &c. It is astonishing how far even half an hour a-day, regularly bestowed on one object, will carry a man in making himself master of it. The habit of dawdling away time is easily acquired, and so is that of putting every moment either to use or to amusement.

"You will not be hasty in forming intimacies with any of your brother-officers, until you observe which of them are most generally respected, and likely to prove most creditable friends. It is seldom that the people who put themselves hastily forward to please, are those most worthy of being known. At the same time you will take care to return all civility

which is offered, with readiness and frankness. The Italians have a proverb, which I hope you have not forgot poor Pierrotti's lessons so far as not to comprehend—'*Volto sciolto e pensieri stretti.*' There is no occasion to let any one see what you exactly think of him; and it is the less prudent, as you will find reason, in all probability, to change your opinion more than once.

"I shall be glad to hear of your being fitted with a good servant. Most of the Irish of that class are scapegraces—drink, steal, and lie like the devil. If you could pick up a canny Scot, it would be well. Let me know about your mess. To drink hard is none of your habits, but even drinking what is called a certain quantity every day hurts the stomach, and by hereditary descent yours is delicate. I believe the poor Duke of Buccleuch laid the foundation of that disease which occasioned his premature death in the excesses of Villars's regiment; and I am sorry and ashamed to say, for your warning, that the habit of drinking wine, so much practised when I was a young man, occasioned, I am convinced, many of my cruel stomach complaints. You had better drink a bottle of wine on any particular occasion, than sit and soak and sipple at an English pint every day.

"All our bipeds are well. Hamlet had an inflammatory attack, and I began to think he was going mad, after the example of his great namesake, but Willie Laidlaw bled him, and he has recovered.

Pussy is very well. Mamma, the girls, and Charlie, join in love. Yours affectionately, W. S.

"P. S.—Always mention what letters of mine you have received, and write to me whatever comes into your head. It is the privilege of great boys when distant that they cannot tire papas by any length of detail upon any subject."

"*To the Same.*

"Abbotsford, 13th August 1819.

"My Dearest Walter,

"I am very much obliged to Colonel Murray for the trouble he has taken on your behalf. I hope he has received the letter which I wrote to him a fortnight since under Mr Freeling's cover. It enclosed a parcel of letters to you. I took the liberty of asking his advice what allowance you should have to assist you. You know pretty well my circumstances and your own, and that I wish you to be comfortable, but not in any respect extravagant; and this for your own sake, and not for that of money, which I never valued very much, perhaps not so much as I ought to have done. I think by speaking to Colonel Murray you may get at his opinion, and I have so much trust in your honour and affection as to confide in your naming your own allowance. Meantime, lest the horse should starve while the

grass grows, I enclose a cheque upon Messrs Coutts for £50, to accompt of your first year's allowance. Your paymaster will give you the money for it I dare say. You have to indorse the bill, *i. e.* write your name on the back of it.

" All concerned are pleased with your kind tokens of remembrance from London. Mamma and I like the caricatures very much. I think, however, scarce any of them shows the fancy and talent of old Gilray: he became insane, I suppose by racking his brain in search of extravagant ideas, and was supported in his helplesss condition by the woman who keeps the great print shop in St James' Street, who had the generosity to remember that she had made thousands by his labour.

" Everything here goes on in the old fashion, and we are all as well as possible, saving that Charles rode to Lawrence fair yesterday in a private excursion, and made himself sick with eating gingerbread, whereby he came to disgrace.

" Sophia has your letter of the 4th, which she received yesterday. The enclosed will help you to set up shop and to get and pay whatever is necessary. I wish we had a touch of your hand to make the parties rise in the morning, at which they show as little alertness as usual.

" I beg you will keep an account of money received and paid. Buy a little book ruled for the purpose, for pounds, shillings, and pence, and keep an account

of cash received and expended. The balance ought to be cash in purse, if the book is regularly kept. But any very small expenses you can enter as 'Sundries, £0 : 3 : 6,' which saves trouble.

"You will find this most satisfactory and useful. But, indeed, arithmetic is indispensable to a soldier who means to rise in his profession. All military movements depend upon calculation of time, numbers, and distance.

"Dogs all well—cat sick—supposed with eating birds in their feathers. Sisters, brother, and mamma join in love to the 'poor wounded hussa-a-r'—I dare say you have heard the song, if not, we shall send it for the benefit of the mess. Yours affectionately, WALTER SCOTT.

"P. S. — Yesterday, *the* 12*th*, would, I suppose, produce some longings after the Peel heights."

In the following letter to Mr Richardson, we see Scott busied about certain little matters of heraldic importance which had to be settled before his patent of baronetcy could be properly made out. He also alludes to two little volumes, which he edited during this autumn—the Memorials of the Haliburtons, a thin quarto (never published) — and the poems of Patrick Carey, of which he had given specimens some years before in the Annual Register.

"*To John Richardson, Esq., Fludyer Street, Westminster.*

"Abbotsford, 22d August 1819.

"My Dear Richardson,

"I am sorry Walter did not get to your kind domicile. But he staid but about five or six days in London, and great was his haste, as you may well suppose. He had a world of trinkums to get, for you know there goes as much to the man-millinery of a young officer of hussars as to that of an heiress on her bridal day. His complete equipage, horses not included, cost about £360, and if you add a couple of blood horses, it will be £200 more, besides the price of his commission, for the privilege of getting the hardness of his skull tried by a brick-bat at the next meeting of Radical Reformers. I am not much afraid of these folks, however, because I remember 1793 and 1794, when the same ideas possessed a much more formidable class of the people, being received by a large proportion of farmers, shopkeepers, and others, possessed of substance. A mere mob will always be a fire of loose straw; but it is melancholy to think of the individual mischief that may be done. I did not find it quite advisable to take so long a journey as London this summer. I am quite recovered; but my last attack was of so dreadful a nature, that I wish to be quite insured

against another—*i. e.* as much as one can be insured against such a circumstance—before leaving home for any length of time.

"To return to the vanities of this world, from what threatened to hurry me to the next: I enclose a drawing of my arms, with the supporters which the heralds here assign me. Our friend Harden seems to wish I would adopt one of his Mer-maidens, otherwise they should be both Moors, as on the left side. I have also added an impression of my seal. You can furnish Sir George Naylor with as much of my genealogy as will serve the present purpose. I shall lose no time in connecting myself by a general service with my granduncle, the last Haliburton of Dryburgh Abbey, or Newmains, as they call it. I spoke to the Lyon-office people in Edinburgh. I find my entry there will be an easy matter, the proofs being very pregnant and accessible. I would not stop for a trifling expense to register my pedigree in England, as far as you think may be necessary, to show that it is a decent one. My ancestors were brave and honest men, and I have no reason to be ashamed of them, though they were neither wealthy nor great.

"As something of an antiquary and genealogist, I should not like there were any mistakes in this matter, so I send you a small note of my descent by my father and my paternal grandmother, with a memorandum of the proofs by which they may be supported, to which I might add a whole cloud of oral

witnesses. I hate the being suspected of fishing for a pedigree, or bolstering one up with false statements. How people can bring themselves to this, I cannot conceive. I send you a copy of the Haliburton MS., of which I have printed twenty for the satisfaction of a few friends. You can have any part of them copied in London which ought to be registered. I should like if Sir George Naylor would take the trouble of looking at the proofs, which are chiefly extracts from the public records. I take this opportunity to send you also a copy of a little amateur-book — Carey's Poem's — a thoroughbred Cavalier, and, I think, no bad versifier. Kind compliments to Mrs Richardson, Yours, my dear Richardson, most truly,

WALTER SCOTT."

"*To Cornet W. Scott, 18th Hussars, Cork.*

"Abbotsford, 4th Sept. 1819.

"Dear Walter,

"Your very acceptable letter of the 26th reached me to-day. I had begun to be apprehensive that the draft had fallen into the hands of the Philistines, but the very long calm must have made the packets slow in their progress, which I suppose was the occasion of the delay. Respecting the allowance, Colonel Murray informs me that from £200 to £250, in addition to the pay of a Cornet, ought to make a young man very comfortable. He adds, which I am

much pleased to hear, that your officers are, many of them, men of moderate fortune, and disposed to be economical. I had thought of £200 as what would suit us both, but when I see the account which you very properly keep, I shall be better able to determine. It must be considered that any uncommon expense, as the lose of a horse or the like, may occasion an extra draught over and above the allowance. I like very much your methodical arrangement as to expenses; it is rather a tiresome thing at first to keep an accompt of pounds, shillings, and pence, but it is highly necessary, and enables one to see how the money actually goes. It is, besides, a good practical way of keeping up acquaintance with arithmetic, and you will soon find that the principles on which all military movements turn are arithmetical, and that though one may no doubt learn to do them by rote, yet to *understand* them, you must have recourse to numbers. Your adjutant will explain this to you. By the way, as he is a foreigner, you will have an opportunity to keep up a little of your French and German. Both are highly necessary to you; the knowledge of the last, with few other qualifications, made several officers' fortunes last war.

"I observe with pleasure you are making acquaintances among the gentry, which I hope you will not drop for want of calling, &c. I trust you have delivered all your recommendations, for it is an affront to omit doing so, both to the person who writes them,

and those for whom they are designed. On the other hand, one always holds their head a little better up in the world when they keep good society. Lord and Lady Melville are to give you recommendations when you go to Dublin. I was at Melville Castle for two days, and found them both well. I was also one day at Langholm lodge to meet Lord Montagu. Possibly, among your Irish friends, you may get some shooting. I shall be glad you avail yourself of any such opportunities, and also that, when you get your own horses, you hunt in the winter, if you be within the reach of hounds. Nothing confirms a man in horsemanship so well as hunting, though I do not recommend it to beginners, who are apt to learn to ride like grooms. Besides the exercise, field-sports make a young soldier acquainted with the country, and habituate him to have a good eye for distance and for taking up the *carte du pays* in general, which is essential to all, but especially to officers of light troops, who are expected to display both alertness and intelligence in reporting the nature of the country, being in fact the *eyes* of the army. In every point of view, field-sports are preferable to the indoors' amusement of a billiard-table, which is too often the lounging-place for idle young officers, where there is nothing to be got but a habit of throwing away time, and an acquaintance with the very worst society—I mean at public billiard-rooms —for unquestionably the game itself is a pretty one,

when practised among gentlemen, and not made a constant habit of. But public billiard-tables are almost always the resort of black-legs and sharpers, and all that numerous class whom the French call *chevaliers d'industrie*, and we *knights of the whipping-post*.

"I am glad you go to the anatomical lectures. An acquaintance with our own very extraordinary frame is a useful branch of general knowledge, and as you have some turn for drawing, it will also enable you to judge of the proper mode of disposing the limbs and muscles of your figures, should you prosecute the art so far. In fact, there is no branch of study can come much amiss to a young man, providing he does study, and very often the precise occupation of the time must be trusted to taste and opportunity.

"The White Boys made a great noise when I was a boy. But Ireland (the more is the pity) has never been without White Boys, or Right Boys, or Defenders, or Peep-of-day Boys, or some wild association or another for disturbing the peace of the country. We shall not be many degrees better if the Radical reformers be not checked. The Manchester Yeomen behaved very well, upsetting the most immense crowd ever was seen, and notwithstanding the lies in the papers, without any unnecessary violence. Mr Hunt pretends to have had several blows on his head with sabres, but has no wound to show for it. I am disposed to wish he had got such

a one as once on a day I could have treated him to. I am apt to think his politic pate would have broached no more sedition.

"Miss Rutherford and Eliza Russell are now with us. We were also favoured with a visit of the Miss ————s, who are rather empty canisters, though I dare say very good girls. Anne tired of them most inhospitably. Mrs Maclean Clephane and her two unmarried daughters are now here; being, as we say, pears of another tree. Your sisters seem very fond of the young ladies, and I am glad of it, for they will see that a great deal of accomplishment and information may be completely reconciled with liveliness, fun, good-humour, and good-breeding.

"All here send love. Dogs and cat are well. I dare say you have heard from some other correspondent that poor Lady Wallace died of an inflammation, after two days' illness. Trout* has returned here several times, poor fellow, and seems to look for you; but Henry Scott is very kind to him, and he is a great favourite.

"As you Hussars smoke, I will give you one of my pipes, but you must let me know how I can send it safely. It is a very handsome one, though not my best. I will keep my *Meer-schaum* until I make my continental tour, and then you shall have that also.

* *Lady Wallace* was a pony; *Trout* a favourite pointer which the Cornet had given, at leaving home, to the young Laird of Harden, now the Master of Polwarth.

I hope you will get leave for a few months, and go with me. Yours very affectionately,

WALTER SCOTT."

About this time, as the succeeding letters will show, Abbotsford had the honour of a short visit from Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg, now King of the Belgians. Immediately afterwards Scott heard of the death of Mrs William Erskine, and repaired to Edinburgh, to condole with his afflicted friend.* His allusions meanwhile, to views of buying more land on Tweedside, are numerous. These speculations are explained in a most characteristic style to the Cornet; and we see that one of them was cut short by the tragical death of a *bonnet-laird* already introduced to the reader's notice—namely, *Lauchie Longlegs*, the admired of Geoffrey Crayon.

"*To Cornet Walter Scott, 18th Hussars, Cork.*

"Abbotsford, 27th Sept. 1819.

"My Dear Walter,

"Your letter of the 10th gave me the pleasant assurance that you are well and happy, and attending to your profession. We have been jogging on here in the old fashion, somewhat varied by an unexpected visit, on Friday last, from no less a person

* For Scott's Epitaph for Mrs Erskine, see his Poetical Works (Edition 1834), vol. xi. p. 347.

than Prince Leopold. I conclude you will have all the particulars of this important event from the other members of the family, so I shall only say that when I mentioned the number of your regiment, the Prince said he had several friends in the 18th, and should now think he had one more, which was very polite. By the way, I hear an excellent character of your officers for regularity and gentlemanlike manners. This report gives me great pleasure, for to live in bad society will deprave the best manners, and to live in good will improve the worst.

"I am trying a sort of bargain with neighbour Nicol Milne at present. He is very desirous of parting with his estate of Faldonside, and if he will be contented with a reasonable price, I am equally desirous to be the purchaser. I conceive it will come to about £30,000 at least. I will not agree to give a penny more; and I think that sum is probably £2000 and more above its actual marketable value. But then it lies extremely convenient for us, and would, joined to Abbotsford, make a very gentlemanlike property, worth at least £1800 or £2000 a-year. I can command about £10,000 of my own, and if I be spared life and health, I should not fear rubbing off the rest of the price, as Nicol is in no hurry for payment. As you will succeed me in my landed property, I think it right to communicate my views to you. I am much moved by the prospect of getting at about £2000 or £3000 worth of marle, which

lies on Milne's side of the loch, but which can only be drained on my side, so that he can make no use of it. This would make the lands of Abbotsford worth 40s. an acre over-head, excepting the sheep farm. I am sensible I might dispose of my money to more advantage, but probably to none which, in the long run, would be better for you—certainly to none which would be productive of so much pleasure to myself. The woods are thriving, and it would be easy, at a trifling expense, to restore Faldonside loch, and stock it with fish. In fact, it would require but a small dam-head. By means of a little judicious planting, added to what is already there, the estate might be rendered one of the most beautiful in this part of Scotland. Such are my present plans, my dear boy, having as much your future welfare and profit in view as the immediate gratification of my own wishes.

"I am very sorry to tell you that poor Mrs William Erskine is no more. She was sent by the medical people on a tour to the lakes of Cumberland, and was taken ill at Lowood, on Windermere. Nature, much exhausted by her previous indisposition, sunk under four days' illness. Her husband was with her, and two of her daughters—he is much to be pitied.

"Mr Rees, the bookseller, told me he had met you in the streets of Cork, and reported well of the growth of your *Schnurr-bart*. I hope you know what that means. Pray write often, as the post comes so

slow. I keep all your letters, and am much pleased with the frankness of the style. No word of your horses yet? but it is better not to be impatient, and to wait for good ones. I have been three times on Newark, and killed six hares each time. The two young dogs are capital good.

"I must not omit to tell you our old, and, I may add, our kind neighbour Lauchie, has departed, or, as Tom expresses it, has been fairly *flytten out o' the warld.* You know the old quarrel betwixt his brother and him about the wife—in an ill-fated hour Jock the brother came down to Lochbreist with a sister from Edinburgh, who was determined to have her share of the scolding-match; they attacked poor old Lauchie like mad folks, and reviled his wife in all sort of evil language. At length his passion was wrought up to a great pitch, and he answered with much emotion, that if she were the greatest ——— in Edinburgh, it was not their business, and as he uttered this speech, he fell down on his back, and lay a dead man before them. There is little doubt the violence of the agitation had broke a blood-vessel in the heart or brain. A very few days since he was running up and down calling for a coffin, and wishing to God he was in one; to which Swanston,* who was present, answered, he could not apply to a better

* John Swanston had then the care of the saw-mill at Toftfield; he was one of Scott's most valued dependants, and in the sequel succeeded Tom Purdie as his henchman.

hand, and he would make him one if he had a mind. He has left a will of his own making, but from some informality I think it will be set aside. His land cannot come into the market until his girl comes of age, which, by the way, makes me more able for the other bargain. * * * * The blackcocks are very plenty. I put up fourteen cocks and hens in walking up the Clappercleuch to look at the wood. Do you not wish you had been on the outside with your gun? Tom has kept us well supplied with game; he boasts that he shot fifteen times without a miss. I shall be glad to hear that you do the same on Mr Newenham's grounds. Mamma, the girls, and Charles, all join in love and affection. Believe me ever, dear Walter,

Your affectionate father,

WALTER SCOTT."

"*To the Lord Montagu, &c. &c. &c.*

"Abbotsford, 3d October 1819.

"My Dear Lord,

"I am honoured with your Buxton letter.... *Anent* Prince Leopold, I only heard of his approach at eight o'clock in the morning, and he was to be at Selkirk by eleven. The magistrates sent to ask me to help them to receive him. It occurred to me he might be coming to Melrose to see the Abbey, in which case I could not avoid asking him to Abbotsford, as he must pass my very door. I men-

tioned this to Mrs Scott, who was lying quietly in bed, and I wish you had heard the scream she gave on the occasion. 'What have we to offer him?'—'Wine and cake,' said I, thinking to make all things easy; but she ejaculated, in a tone of utter despair, 'Cake!! where am I to get cake?' However, being partly consoled with the recollection that his visit was a very improbable incident, and curiosity, as usual, proving too strong for alarm, she set out with me in order not to miss a peep of the great man. James Skene and his lady were with us, and we gave our carriages such additional dignity as a pair of leaders could add, and went to meet him in full puff. The Prince very civilly told me, that, though he could not see Melrose on this occasion, he wished to come to Abbotsford for an hour. New despair on the part of Mrs Scott, who began to institute a domiciliary search for cold meat through the whole city of Selkirk, which produced *one shoulder of cold lamb.* In the meanwhile, his Royal Highness received the civic honours of the BIRSE* very graciously. I had hinted to Bailie Lang,† that it ought only to be licked *symbolically* on the present occasion; so he flourished it three times before his mouth, but without touching it with his lips, and the Prince followed his example as directed. Lang

* See *ante*, Vol. V. p. 122.

† Scott's good friend, Mr Andrew Lang, Procurator-fiscal for Selkirkshire, was then chief magistrate of the county town.

made an excellent speech, sensible, and feeling, and well delivered. The Prince seemed much surprised at this great propriety of expression and behaviour in a magistrate, whose people seemed such a rabble, and whose whole band of music consisted in a drum and fife. He noticed to Bailie Anderson, that Selkirk seemed very populous in proportion to its extent. 'On an occasion like this it seems so,' answered the Bailie, neatly enough I thought. I question if any magistrates in the kingdom, lord mayors and aldermen not accepted, could have behaved with more decent and quiet good-breeding. Prince Leopold repeatedly alluded to this during the time he was at Abbotsford. I do not know how Mrs Scott ultimately managed; but with broiled salmon, and black-cock, and partridges, she gave him a very decent lunch; and I chanced to have some very fine old hock, which was mighty germain to the matter.

"The Prince seems melancholy, whether naturally or from habit, I do not pretend to say; but I do not remember thinking him so at Paris, where I saw him frequently, then a much poorer man than myself; yet he showed some humour, for, alluding to the crowds that followed him everywhere, he mentioned some place where he had gone out to shoot, but was afraid to proceed for fear of 'bagging a boy.' He said he really thought of getting some shooting-place in Scotland, and promised me a longer visit on his return. If I had had a day's notice to have *warned*

the waters, we could have met him with a very respectable number of the gentry; but there was no time for this, and probably he liked it better as it was. There was only young Clifton who could have come, and he was shy and cubbish, and would not, though requested by the Selkirk people. He was perhaps ashamed to march through Coventry with them. It hung often and sadly on my mind that *he* was wanting who could and would have received him like a Prince indeed; and yet the meeting betwixt them, had they been fated to meet, would have been a very sad one. I think I have now given your lordship a very full, true, and particular account of our royal visit, unmatched even by that of King Charles at the Castle of Tillietudlem. That we did not speak of it for more than a week after it happened, and that that emphatic monosyllable, *The Prince*, is not heard amongst us more than ten times a-day, is, on the whole, to the credit of my family's understanding. The piper is the only one whose brain he seems to have endangered; for, as the Prince said he preferred him to any he had heard in the Highlands—(which, by the way, shows his Royal Highness knows nothing of the matter),—the fellow seems to have become incapable of his ordinary occupation as a forester, and has cut stick and stem without remorse to the tune of *Phail Phranse*, *i. e.* the Prince's Welcome.

" I am just going to the head-court with Donald-

son, and go a day sooner to exhume certain old monuments of the Rutherfords at Jedburgh. Edgerstone* is to meet me at Jedburgh for this research, and then we shall go up with him to dinner. My best respects attend Lady Montagu. I wish this letter may reach you on a more lively day than it is written in, for it requires little to add to its dulness. Tweed is coming down very fast, the first time this summer. Believe me, my dear Lord, most truly yours, WALTER SCOTT."

"*To W. Scott, Esq., 18th Hussars, Cork.*

"Abbotsford, 14th October 1819.

"Dear Walter,

"I had your last letter, and am very glad you find pleasant society. Mrs Dundas of Arniston is so good as to send you some introductions, which you will deliver as soon as possible. You will be now in some degree accustomed to meet with strangers, and to form your estimate of their character and manners. I hope, in the meantime, the French and German are attended to; please to mention in your

* The late John Rutherford of Edgerstone, long M.P. for Roxburghshire, was a person of high worth, and universally esteemed. Scott used to say Edgerstone was his *beau ideal* of the character of a country gentleman. He was, I believe, the head of the once great and powerful clan of Rutherford.

next letter what you are reading, and in what languages. The hours of youth, my dear Walter, are too precious to be spent all in gaiety. We must lay up in that period when our spirit is active, and our memory strong, the stores of information which are not only to facilitate our progress through life, but to amuse and interest us in our later stage of existence. I very often think what an unhappy person I should have been, if I had not done something more or less towards improving my understanding when I was at your age; and I never reflect, without severe self-condemnation, on the opportunities of acquiring knowledge which I either trifled with, or altogether neglected. I hope you will be wiser than I have been, and experience less of that self-reproach.

"My last acquainted you with Mrs Erskine's death, and I grieve to say we have just received intelligence that our kind neighbour and good friend Lord Somerville is at the very last gasp. His disease is a dysentery, and the symptoms, as his brother writes to Mr Samuel Somerville, are mortal. He is at Vevay, upon his road, I suppose, to Italy, where he had purposed spending the winter. His death, for I understand nothing else can be expected, will be another severe loss to me; for he was a kind, good friend, and at my time of day men do not readily take to new associates. I must own this has been one of the most melancholy years I ever past. The poor Duke, who loved me so well — Mrs

Erskine — Lord Somerville — not to mention others with whom I was less intimate, make it one year of mourning. I should not forget the Chief Baron, who, though from ill health we met of late seldom, was always my dear friend, and indeed very early benefactor. I must look forwards to seeing in your success and respectability, and in the affection and active improvement of all of you, those pleasures which are narrowed by the death of my contemporaries. Men cannot form new intimacies at my period of life, but must be happy or otherwise according to the good fortune and good conduct of those near relatives who rise around them.

"I wish much to know if you are lucky in a servant. Trust him with as little cash as possible, and keep short accounts. Many a good servant is spoiled by neglecting this simple precaution. The man is tempted to some expense of his own, gives way to it, and then has to make it up by a system of overcharge and peculation; and thus mischief begins, and the carelessness of the master makes a rogue out of an honest lad, and cheats himself into the bargain.

"I have a letter from your uncle Tom, telling me his eldest daughter is to be forthwith married to a Captain Huxley of his own regiment. As he has had a full opportunity of being acquainted with the young gentleman, and approves of the match, I have to hope that it will be a happy one. I fear there is

no great fortune in the case on either side, which is to be regretted.

"Of domestic affairs I have little to tell you. The harvest has been excellent, the weather delightful; but this I must often have repeated. To-day I was thinning out fir-trees in the thicket, and the men were quite exhausted with the heat, and I myself, though only marking the trees, felt the exercise sufficiently warm. The wood is thriving delightfully. On the 28th we are to have a dance in honour of your birthday. I wish you could look in upon us for the day at least — only I am afraid we could not part with you when it was over, and so you would be in the guise of Cinderella, when she outstaid her time at the ball, and all her finery returned into its original base materials. Talking of balls, the girls would tell you the Melrose hop, where mamma presided, went off well.

"I expect poor Erskine and his daughter next week, or the week after. I went into town to see him — and found him bearing his great loss with his natural gentleness and patience. But he was sufficiently distressed, as he has great reason to be. I also expect Lord and Lady Melville here very soon. Sir William Rae (now Lord Advocate) and his lady came to us on Saturday. On Sunday Maida walked with us, and in jumping the paling at the Greentongue park contrived to hang himself up by the hind leg. He howled at first, but seeing us making

towards him he stopped crying, and waved his tail by way of signal, it was supposed, for assistance. He sustained no material injury, though his leg was strangely twisted into the bars, and he was nearly hanging by it. He showed great gratitude, in his way, to his deliverers.

" This is a long letter, and little in it; but that is nothing extraordinary. All send best love — and I am ever, dear Walter, your affectionate father,

WALTER SCOTT."

" *To Thomas Scott, Esq., Paymaster 70th Regiment, Canada.*

" Abbotsford, 16th Oct. 1819.

" Dear Tom,

" I received yesterday your very acceptable letter, containing the news of Jessie's approaching marriage, in which, as a match agreeable to her mother and you, and relieving your minds from some of the anxious prospects which haunt those of parents, I take the most sincere interest. Before this reaches you, the event will probably have taken place. Meantime, I enclose a letter to the bride or wife, as the case may happen to be. I have sent a small token of good-will to ballast my good wishes, which you will please to value for the young lady, that she may employ it as most convenient or agreeable to her. A little more fortune would perhaps

have done the young folks no harm; but Captain Huxley, being such as you describe him, will have every chance of getting forward in his profession; and the happiest marriages are often those in which there is, at first, occasion for prudence and economy. I do certainly feel a little of the surprise which you hint at, for time flies over our heads one scarce marks how, and children become marriageable ere we consider them as out of the nursery. My eldest son, Walter, has also wedded himself—but it is to a regiment of hussars. He is at present a cornet in the 18th, and quartered in Cork barracks. He is capital at most exercises, but particularly as a horseman. I do not intend he shall remain in the cavalry, however, but shall get him into the line when he is capable of promotion. Since he has chosen this profession, I shall be desirous that he follows it out in good earnest, and that can only be done by getting into the infantry.

" My late severe illness has prevented my going up to London to receive the honour which the Prince Regent has announced his intention to inflict upon me. My present intention is, if I continue as well as I have been, to go up about Christmas to get this affair over. My health was restored (I trust permanently) by the use of calomel, a very severe and painful remedy, especially in my exhausted state of body, but it has proved a radical one. By the way, *Radical* is a word in very bad odour here,

being used to denote a set of blackguards a hundred times more mischievous and absurd than our old friends in 1794 and 1795. You will learn enough of the doings of the *Radical Reformers* from the papers. In Scotland we are quiet enough, excepting in the manufacturing districts, and we are in very good hands, as Sir William Rae, our old commander, is Lord Advocate. Rae has been here two or three days, and left me yesterday—he is the old man, sensible, cool-headed, and firm, always thinking of his duty, never of himself. He enquired kindly after you, and I think will be disposed to serve you, should an opportunity offer. Poor William Erskine has lost his excellent wife, after a long and wasting illness. She died at Lowood on Windermere, he having been recommended to take her upon a tour about three weeks before her death. I own I should scarce forgive a physician who should contrive to give me this addition to family distress. I went to town last week to see him, and found him, upon the whole, much better than I expected. I saw my mother on the same occasion, admirably well indeed. She is greatly better than this time two years, when she rather quacked herself a little too much. I have sent your letter to our mother, and will not fail to transmit to our other friends the agreeable news of your daughter's settlement. Our cousin, Sir Harry Macdougal, is marrying his eldest daughter to Sir Thomas Brisbane, a very good match on both sides.

I have been paying a visit on the occasion, which suspends my closing this letter. I hope to hear very soon from you. Respecting our silence, I like a ghost only waited to be spoken to, and you may depend on me as a regular correspondent, when you find time to be one yourself. Charlotte and the girls join in kind love to Mrs Scott and all the family. I should like to know what you mean to do with young Walter, and whether I can assist you in that matter. Believe me, dear Tom, ever your affectionate brother, W. SCOTT."

"*To Daniel Terry, Esq., London.*

"Abbotsford, Nov. 10, 1819.

"My Dear Terry,

"I should be very sorry if you thought the interest I take in you and yours so slight as not to render your last letter extremely interesting. We have all our various combats to fight in this best of all possible worlds, and, like brave fellow-soldiers, ought to assist one another as much as possible. I have little doubt, that if God spares me till my little namesake be fit to take up his share of the burden, I may have interest enough to be of great advantage to him in the entrance of life. In the present state of your own profession, you would not willingly, I suppose, choose him to follow it; and, as it is very seductive to young people of a lively temper and

good taste for the art, you should, I think, consider early how you mean to dispose of little Walter, with a view, that is, to the future line of life which you would wish him to adopt. Mrs Terry has not the good health which all who know her amiable disposition and fine accomplishments would anxiously wish her; yet, with impaired health and the caution which it renders necessary, we have very frequently instances of the utmost verge of existence being attained, while robust strength is cut off in the middle career. So you must be of good heart, and hope the best in this as in other cases of a like affecting nature. I go to town on Monday, and will forward under Mr Freeling's cover as much of Ivanhoe as is finished in print. It is completed, but in the hands of a very slow transcriber; when I can collect it I will send you the MS., which you will please to keep secret from every eye. I think this will give a start, if it be worth taking, of about a month, for the work will be out on the 20th of December. It is certainly possible to adapt it to the stage, but the expense of scenery and decorations would be great, this being a tale of chivalry, not of character. There is a tale in existence, by dramatizing which, I am certain, a most powerful effect might be produced: it is called Undine, and I believe has been translated into French by Mademoiselle Montolieu, and into English from her version: do read it, and tell me your opinion: in German the character of Undine

is exquisite. The only objection is, that the catastrophe is unhappy, but this might be altered. I hope to be in London for ten days the end of next month; and so good bye for the present, being in great haste, most truly yours, W. SCOTT."

I conclude this chapter with a letter written two or three days before Scott quitted Abbotsford for the winter session. It is addressed to his friend Hartstonge, who had taken the opportunity of the renewal of Scott's correspondence to solicit his opinion and assistance touching a MS. drama; and the reader will be diverted with the style in which the amiable tragedian is treated to his *quietus*:—

"*To Matthew Weld Hartstonge, Esq., Dublin.*

"Abbotsford, 11th Nov. 1819.

"My Dear Sir,

"I was duly favoured with your packet, containing the play, as well as your very kind letter. I will endeavour (though extremely unwilling to offer criticism on most occasions) to meet your confidence with perfect frankness. I do not consider the Tragedy as likely to make that favourable impression on the public which I would wish that the performance of a friend should effect—and I by no means recommend to you to hazard it upon the boards. In other compositions, the neglect of the world takes nothing

from the merit of the author; but there is something ludicrous in being *affiché* as the author of an unsuccessful play. Besides, you entail on yourself the great and eternal plague of altering and retrenching to please the humours of performers, who are, speaking generally, extremely ignorant, and capricious in proportion. These are not vexations to be voluntarily undertaken; and the truth is, that in the present day there is only one reason which seems to me adequate for the encountering the plague of trying to please a set of conceited performers and a very motley audience,—I mean the want of money, from which, fortunately, you are exempted. It is very true that some day or other a great dramatic genuis may arise to strike out a new path; but I fear till this happens no great effect will be produced by treading in the old one. The reign of Tragedy seems to be over, and the very considerable poetical abilities which have been lately applied to it, have failed to revive it. Should the public ever be indulged with small theatres adapted to the hours of the better ranks in life, the dramatic art may recover; at present it is in abeyance—and I do therefore advise you in all sincerity to keep the Tragedy (which I return under cover) safe under your own charge. Pray think of this as one of the most unpleasant offices of friendship—and be not angry with me for having been very frank, upon an occasion when frankness may be more useful than altogether palatable.

"I am much obliged to you for your kind intentions towards my young Hussar. We have not heard from him for three weeks. I believe he is making out a meditated visit to Killarney. I am just leaving the country for Edinburgh, to attend my duty in the courts; but the badness of the weather in some measure reconciles me to the unpleasant change. I have the pleasure to continue the most satisfactory accounts of my health; it is, to external appearance, as strong as in my strongest days—indeed, after I took once more to Sancho's favourite occupations of eating and sleeping, I recovered my losses wonderfully. Very truly yours, WALTER SCOTT."

CHAPTER XLVI.

Political Alarms — The Radicals — Levies of Volunteers — Project of the Buccleuch Legion — Death of Scott's Mother, her Brother Dr Rutherford, and her Sister Christian — Letters to Lord Montagu, Mr Thomas Scott, Cornet Scott, Mr Laidlaw, and Lady Louisa Stuart — Publication of Ivanhoe.

1819.

TOWARDS the winter of 1819 there prevailed a spirit of alarming insubordination among the mining population of Northumberland and the weavers of the West of Scotland; and Scott was particularly gratified with finding that his own neighbours at Galashiels had escaped the contagion. There can be little doubt that this exemption was principally owing to the personal influence and authority of the Laird of Abbotsford and Sheriff of the Forest; but the people of Galashiels were also fortunate in the qualities of their own beneficent landlords, Mr

Scott of Gala, and Mr Pringle of Torwoodlee. The progress of the western *Reformers* by degrees led even the most important *Whigs* in that district to exert themselves in the organization of volunteer regiments, both mounted and dismounted; and, when it became generally suspected that Glasgow and Paisley maintained a dangerous correspondence with the refractory colliers of Northumberland — Scott and his friends the Lairds of Torwoodlee and Gala determined to avail themselves of the loyalty and spirit of the men of Ettrick and Teviotdale, and proposed first raising a company of sharpshooters among their own immediate neighbours, and afterwards — this plan receiving every encouragement — a legion or brigade upon a large scale, to be called the Buccleuch Legion. During November and December 1819, these matters formed the chief daily care and occupation of the author of Ivanhoe; and though he was still obliged to dictate most of the chapters of his novel, we shall see that, in case it should be necessary for the projected levy of Foresters to march upon Tynedale, he was prepared to place himself at their head.

He had again intended, as soon as he should have finished Ivanhoe, to proceed to London, and receive his baronetcy; but as that affair had been crossed at Easter by his own illness, so at Christmas it was again obliged to be put off in consequence of a heavy series of domestic afflictions. Within one week

Scott lost his excellent mother, his uncle Dr Daniel Rutherford, Professor of Botany in the University of Edinburgh—and their sister, Christian Rutherford, already often mentioned as one of the dearest and most esteemed of all his friends and connexions.

The following letters require no further introduction or comment:—

"*To the Lord Montagu, Buxton.*

"Abbotsford, 12th Nov. 1819.

"My Dear Lord,

* * * * * * I wish I had any news to send your Lordship; but the best is, we are all quiet here. The Galashiels weavers, both men and masters, have made their political creed known to me, and have sworn themselves anti-radical. They came in solemn procession, with their banners, and my own piper at their head, whom they had borrowed for the nonce. But the Tweed being in flood, we could only communicate like Wallace and Bruce across the Carron. However, two deputies came through in the boat, and made me acquainted with their loyal purposes. The evening was crowned with two most distinguished actions—the weavers refusing, in the most peremptory manner, to accept of a couple of guineas to buy whisky, and the renowned John of Skye, piper in ordinary to the Laird of Abbotsford, no less steadily refusing a very handsome collection,

which they offered him for his minstrelsy. All this sounds very nonsensical, but the people must be humoured and countenanced when they take the right turn, otherwise they will be sure to take the wrong. The accounts from the West sometimes make me wish our little Duke five or six years older, and able to get on horseback. It seems approaching to the old song—

> 'Come fill up our cup, come fill up our can,
> Come saddle the horses, and call up our men,
> Come open the gates, and let us go free,
> And we'll show them the bonnets of bonny Dundee.'*

"I am rather too old for that work now, and I cannot look forward to it with the sort of feeling that resembled pleasure—as I did in my younger and more healthy days. However, I have got a good following here, and will endeavour to keep them together till times mend.

"My respectful compliments attend Lady Montagu, and I am always, with the greatest regard, your Lordship's very faithful WALTER SCOTT."

"*To Cornet Walter Scott, 18th Hussars.*

"Edinburgh, 13th Nov. 1819.

"Dear Walter,

"I am much surprised and rather hurt at not hearing from you for so long a while. You ought

* See Scott's Poetical Works, vol. xii. p. 195.

to remember that, however pleasantly the time may be passing with you, we at home have some right to expect that a part of it (a very small part will serve the turn) should be dedicated, were it but for the sake of propriety, to let us know what you are about. I cannot say I shall be flattered by finding myself under the necessity of again complaining of neglect. To write once a-week to one or other of us is no great sacrifice, and it is what I earnestly pray you to do.

" We are to have great doings in Edinburgh this winter. No less than Prince Gustavus of Sweden is to pass the season here, and do what Princes call studying. He is but half a Prince either, for this Northern Star is somewhat shorn of his beams. His father was, you know, dethroned by Buonaparte, at least by the influence of his arms, and one of his generals, Bernadotte, made heir of the Swedish throne in his stead. But this youngster, I suppose, has his own dreams of royalty, for he is nephew to the Emperor of Russia (by the mother's side), and that is a likely connexion to be of use to him, should the Swedish nobles get rid of Bernadotte, as it is said they wish to do. Lord Melville has recommended the said Prince particularly to my attention, though I do not see how I can do much for him.

" I have just achieved my grand remove from Abbotsford to Edinburgh—a motion which you know I do not make with great satisfaction. We had the

Abbotsford hunt last week. The company was small, as the newspapers say, but select, and we had excellent sport, killing eight hares. We coursed on Gala's ground, and he was with us. The dinner went off with its usual alacrity, but we wanted you and Sally to ride and mark for us.

" I enclose another letter from Mrs Dundas of Arniston. I am afraid you have been careless in not delivering those I formerly forwarded, because in one of them, which Mrs Dundas got from a friend, there was enclosed a draught for some money. I beg you will be particular in delivering any letters intrusted to you, because though the good-nature of the writers may induce them to write to be of service to you, yet it is possible that they may, as in this instance, add things which are otherwise of importance to their correspondents. It is probable that you may have picked up among your military friends the idea that the mess of a regiment is all in all sufficient to itself; but when you see a little of the world you will be satisfied that none but pedants—for there is pedantry in all professions—herd exclusively together, and that those who do so are laughed at in real good company. This you may take on the authority of one who has seen more of life and society, in all its various gradations, from the highest to the lowest, than a whole hussar regimental mess, and who would be much pleased by knowing that you reap the benefit of an experience which has raised him from

a person of small consideration, to the honour
father of an officer of hussars. I therefore
another letter from the same kind friend, of
I pray you to avail yourself. In fact, those
who associate entirely among themselves see
more of the world than their messman.
and disagreeable by neglecting the
advantages offered for enlarging their understand-
unprejudiced soldier whom I have known,
was a man of the world, and
society.

I have to inform you
—day. I have a remittance of
whenever you are pleased to let me
—, like a ghost, I will

of your leave of
if my health continues
on the Continent next
desirous to have you
you to look after your
a visit from a very
Sir Thomas Bris-
a brigade in the Penin-
with it,
a well-informed man on all
his own profession.
Sir
daughter he is

to marry, brought him to Abbotsford on a sort of wedding visit, as we are cousins according to the old fashion of country kin; Beardie, of whom Sir Harry has a beautiful picture, being a son of an Isabel Macdougal, who was, I fancy, grand-aunt to Sir Harry.

"Once more, my dear Walter, write more frequently, and do not allow yourself to think that the first neglect in correspondence I have ever had to complain of has been on your part. I hope you have received the Meerschaum pipe.—I remain your affectionate father, WALTER SCOTT."

"*To the Same.*

"Edinburgh, 3d December 1819.

"My Dear Walter,

"I hope your servant proves careful and trusty. Pray let me know this. At any rate, do not trust him a bit further than you can help it, for in buying anything you will get it much cheaper yourself than he will. We are now settled for the winter; that is, all of them excepting myself, who must soon look southwards. On Saturday we had a grand visiter, *i. e.* the Crown Prince of Sweden, under the name of Count Itterburg. His travelling companion or tutor is Baron de Polier, a Swiss of eminence in literature and rank. They took a long look at King Charles XII, who, you cannot have forgotten, keeps his post over the dining-room chimney; and we were

all struck with the resemblance betwixt old Ironhead, as the janissaries called him, and his descendant. The said descendant is a very fine lad, with very soft and mild manners, and we passed the day very pleasantly. They were much diverted with Captain Adam,* who outdid his usual outdoings, and, like the barber of Bagdad, danced the dance and sung the song of every person he spoke of.

"I am concerned I cannot give a very pleasant account of things here. Glasgow is in a terrible state. The Radicals had a plan to seize on 1000 stand of arms, as well as a depôt of ammunition, which had been sent from Edinburgh Castle for the use of the volunteers. The Commander-in-Chief, Sir Thomas Bradford, went to Glasgow in person, and the whole city was occupied with patroles of horse and foot, to deter them from the meditated attack on the barracks. The arms were then delivered to the volunteers, who are said to be 4000 on paper; how many effective and trustworthy, I know not. But it was a new sight in Scotland on a Sunday to see all the inhabitants in arms, soldiers patrolling the streets, and the utmost precaution of military service exacted and observed in an apparently peaceful city.

"The Old Blue Regiment of volunteers was again summoned together yesterday. They did not muster very numerous, and looked most of them a little

* Sir Adam Fergusson.

ancient. However, they are getting recruits fast, and then the veterans may fall out of the ranks. The Commander-in-Chief has told the President that he may soon be obliged to leave the charge of the Castle to these armed citizens. This looks serious. The President* made one of the most eloquent addresses that ever was heard, to the Old Blues. The Highland Chiefs have offered to raise their clans, and march them to any point in Scotland where their services shall be required. To be sure, the Glasgow folks would be a little surprised at the arrival of Dugald Dhu, 'brogues an' brochan an' a'.' I shall, I think, bid Ballantyne send you a copy of his weekly paper, which often contains things you would like to see, and will keep you in mind of Old Scotland.

"They are embodying a troop of cavalry in Edinburgh — nice young men and good horses. They have paid me the compliment to make me an honorary member of the corps, as my days of active service have been long over. Pray take care, however, of my sabre, in case the time comes which must turn out all.

"I have almost settled that, if things look moderately tranquil in Britain in spring or summer, I will go abroad, and take Charles, with the purpose of leaving him, for two or three years, at the famous

* The Right Honourable Charles Hope, Lord President of the Court of Session, was Colonel-commandant of the Old Blues, or First Regiment of Edinburgh Volunteers.

institution of Fellenborg, near Berne, of which I hear very highly. Two of Fraser Tytler's sons are there, and he makes a very favourable report of the whole establishment. I think that such a residence abroad will not only make him well acquainted with French and German, as indeed he will hear nothing else, but also prevent his becoming an Edinburgh *petit-maître* of fourteen or fifteen, which he could otherwise scarce avoid. I mentioned to you that I should be particularly glad to get you leave of absence, providing it does not interfere with your duty, in order that you may go with us. If I have cash enough I will also take your sister and mamma, and you might return home with them by Paris, in case I went on to Italy. All this is doubtful, but I think it is almost certain that Charles and I go, and hope to have you with us. This will be probably about July next, and I wish you particularly to keep it in view. If these dark prospects become darker, which God forbid! neither you nor I will have it in our power to leave the post to which duty calls us.

"Mamma and the girls are quite well, and so is Master Charles, who is of course more magnificent, as being the only specimen of youthhead at home. He has got an old broadsword hanging up at his bed-head, which, to be the more ready for service, hath no sheath. To this I understand we are to trust for our defence against the Radicals. Anne (notwithstanding the assurance) is so much afraid of

the disaffected, that last night, returning with Sophia from Portobello, where they had been dancing with the Scotts of Harden, she saw a Radical in every man that the carriage passed. Sophia is of course wise and philosophical, and mamma has not yet been able to conceive why we do not catch and hang the whole of them, untried and unconvicted. Amidst all their various emotions, they join in best love to you; and I always am very truly yours, W. SCOTT.

"P. S.—I shall set off for London on the 25th."

"*To the Same.*

"Edinburgh, 17th December 1819.

"My Dear Walter,

"I have a train of most melancholy news to acquaint you with. On Saturday I saw your grandmother perfectly well, and on Sunday the girls drank tea with her, when the good old lady was more than usually in spirits; and, as if she had wished to impress many things on their memory, told over a number of her old stories with her usual alertness and vivacity. On Monday she had an indisposition, which proved to be a paralytic affection, and on Tuesday she was speechless, and had lost the power of one side, without any hope of recovery, although she may linger some days. But what is very remarkable, and no less shocking, Dr Rutherford, who

attended his sister in perfect health upon Tuesday, died himself upon the Wednesday morning. He had breakfasted without intimating the least illness, and was dressed to go out, and particularly to visit my mother, when he sunk backwards, and died in his daughter Anne's arms, almost without a groan. To add to this melancholy list, our poor friend, Miss Christie, is despaired of. She was much affected by my mother's fatal indisposition, but does not know as yet of her brother's death.

"Dr Rutherford was a very ingenious as well as an excellent man, more of a gentleman than his profession too often are, for he could not take the back-stairs mode of rising in it, otherwise he might have been much more wealthy. He ought to have had the Chemistry class, as he was one of the best chemists in Europe;* but superior interest assigned it to another, who, though a neat experimentalist, is not to be compared to poor Daniel for originality of genius. Since you knew him, his health was broken

* "The subject of his *Thesis* is singular, and entitles Rutherford to rank very high among the chemical philosophers of modern times. Its title is 'De Aere Mephitico,' &c. — It is universally admitted that Dr Rutherford first discovered this gas — the reputation of his discovery being speedily spread through Europe, his character as a chemist of the first eminence was firmly established, and much was augured from a young man in his twenty-second year having distinguished himself so remarkably." — Bower's *History of the University of Edinburgh*, vol. iii. (1830), pp. 260–1.

and his spirits dejected, which may be traced to the loss of his eldest son on board an East Indiaman, and also, I think, to a slight paralytic touch which he had some years ago.

" To all this domestic distress I have to add the fearful and unsettled state of the country. All the regular troops are gone to Glasgow. The Mid-Lothian Yeomanry and other corps of volunteers went there on Monday, and about 5000 men occupied the town. In the meanwhile, we were under considerable apprehension here, the Castle being left in the charge of the city volunteers and a few veterans.

" All our corner, high and low, is loyal. Torwoodlee, Gala, and I, have offered to raise a corps, to be called the Loyal Foresters, to act anywhere south of the Forth. If matters get worse, I will ask leave of absence for you from the Commander-in-chief, because your presence will be materially useful to levy men, and you can only be idle where you are, unless Ireland should be disturbed. Your old corps of the Selkirkshire Yeomany have been under orders, and expect to be sent either to Dumfries or Carlisle. Berwick is dismantled, and they are removing the stores, cannon, &c., from one of the strongest places here, for I defy the devil to pass the bridge at Berwick, if reasonably well kept by 100 men. But there is a spirit of consternation implied in many of the orders, which, *entre nous*, I like worse than what I

see or know of the circumstances which infer real danger. For myself I am too old to fight, but nobody is too old to die, like a man of virtue and honour, in defence of the principles he has always maintained.

"I would have you to keep yourself ready to return here suddenly, in case the Duke of York should permit your temporary services in your own country, which, if things grow worse, I will certainly ask. The fearful thing is the secret and steady silence observed by the Radicals in all they do. Yet, without anything like effective arms or useful discipline, without money and without a commissariat, what can they do, but, according to their favourite toast, have blood and plunder? Mamma and the girls, as well as Charles, send kind love. Your affectionate father,

WALTER SCOTT."

"*To Mr William Laidlaw, Kaeside.*

"Edinburgh, Dec. 20, 1819.

"My Dear Willie,

"Distress has been very busy with me since I wrote to you. I have lost, in the course of one week, my valued relations, Dr and Miss Rutherford —happy in this, that neither knew of the other's dissolution. My dear mother has offered me deeper subject of affliction, having been struck with the

palsy, and being now in such a state that I scarce hope to see her again.

"But the strange times compel me, under this pressure of domestic distress, to attend to public business. I find Mr Scott of Gala agrees with me in thinking we should appeal at this crisis to the good sense and loyalty of the lower orders, and we have resolved to break the ice, and be the first in the Lowlands, so far as I have yet heard of, to invite our labourers and those over whom circumstances and fortune give us influence, to rise with us in arms, and share our fate. You know, as well as any one, that I have always spent twice the income of my property in giving work to my neighbours, and I hope they will not be behind the Galashiels people, who are very zealous. Gala and I go hand in hand, and propose to raise at least a company each of men, to be drilled as sharpshooters or infantry, which will be a lively and interesting amusement for the young fellows. The dress we propose to be as simple, and at the same time as serviceable as possible;—a jacket and trowsers of Galashiels grey cloth, and a smart bonnet with a small feather, or, to save even that expense, a sprig of holly. And we will have shooting at the mark, and prizes, and fun, and a little whisky, and daily pay when on duty or drill. I beg of you, dear Willie, to communicate my wish to all who have received a good turn at my hand, or may expect one, or may be desirous of doing me one—

(for I should be sorry Darnick and Brigend were beat)—and to all other free and honest fellows who will take share with me on this occasion. I do not wish to take any command farther than such as shall entitle me to go with the corps, for I wish it to be distinctly understood that, in whatever capacity, *I go with them*, and take a share in good or bad as it casts up. I cannot doubt that I will have your support, and I hope you will use all your enthusiasm in our behalf. Morrison volunteers as our engineer. Those who I think should be spoke to are the following, among the higher class—

"John Usher.* He should be lieutenant, or his son ensign.

"Sam Somerville.† I will speak to him—he may be lieutenant, if Usher declines; but I think in that case Usher should give us his son.

"Young Nicol Milne‡ is rather young, but I will offer to his father to take him in.

"Harper§ is a *sine quo non*. Tell him I depend

* Mr Usher has already been mentioned as Scott's predecessor in the property of Toftfield. He now resided near those lands, and was Scott's tenant on the greater part of them.

† Samuel Somerville, W. S. (a son of the historian of Queen Anne) had a pretty villa at Lowood, on the Tweed, immediately opposite the seat of his relation, Lord Somerville, of whose estate he had the management.

‡ Nicol Milne, Esq. (now advocate), eldest son of the Laird of Faldonside.

§ Harper, keeper of a little inn at Darnick, was a gallant and

on him for the honour of Darnick. I should propose to him to take a gallant halbert.

" Adam Fergusson thinks you should be our adjutant. John Fergusson I propose for captain. He is steady, right bold, and has seen much fire. The auld captain will help us in one shape or other. For myself, I know not what they propose to make of me, but it cannot be anything very active. However, I should like to have a steady quiet horse, drilled to stand fire well, and if he has these properties, no matter how stupid, so he does not stumble. In this case the price of such a horse will be no object.

" These, my dear friend, are your beating orders. I would propose to raise about sixty men, and not to take old men. John the Turk* will be a capital corporal; and I hope in general that all my young fellows will go with me, leaving the older men to go through necessary labour. Sound Tom what he would like. I think, perhaps, he would prefer managing matters at home in your absence and mine at drill.

" John of Skye is cock-a-hoop upon the occasion, and I suppose has made fifty blunders about it by this time. You must warn Tom Jamieson, Gordon

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spirited yeoman—uniformly the gainer of the prizes at every contest of strength and agility in that district.

* One of Scott's foresters — thus designated as being, in all senses of the word, a *gallant* fellow.

Winness, John Swanston (who will carry off all the prizes at shooting), Davidson, and so forth.

"If you think it necessary, a little handbill might be circulated. But it may be better to see if Government will accept our services; and I think, in the situation of the country, when work is scarce, and we offer pay for their playing themselves, we should have choice of men. But I would urge no one to do what he did not like.

"The very precarious state of my poor mother detains me here, and makes me devolve this troublesome duty upon you. All you have to do, however, is to sound the men, and mark down those who seem zealous. They will perhaps have to fight with the pitmen and colliers of Northumberland for defence of their firesides, for these literal *blackguards* are got beyond the management of their own people. And if such is the case, better keep them from coming into Scotland, than encounter the mischief they might do there. Yours always most truly,

WALTER SCOTT."

"*To Thomas Scott, Esq., 70th Regiment, Kingston, Canada.*

"Edinburgh, 22d December 1819.

"My Dear Tom,

"I wrote you about ten days since, stating that we were all well here. In that very short space a

change so sudden and so universal has taken place among your friends here, that I have to communicate to you a most miserable catalogue of losses. Our dear mother was on Sunday the 12th December in all her usual strength and alertness of mind. I had seen and conversed with her on the Saturday preceding, and never saw her better in my life of late years. My two daughters drank tea with her on Sunday, when she was uncommonly lively, telling them a number of stories, and being in rather unusual spirits, probably from the degree of excitation which sometimes is remarked to precede a paralytic affection. In the course of Monday she received that fatal summons, which at first seemed slight; but in the night betwixt Monday and Tuesday our mother lost the use both of speech and of one side. Since that time she has lain in bed constantly, yet so sensible as to see me and express her earnest blessing on all of us. The power of speech is totally lost; nor is there any hope, at her advanced age, that the scene can last long. Probably a few hours will terminate it. At any rate, life is not to be wished, even for our nearest and dearest in those circumstances. But this heavy calamity was only the commencement of our family losses. Dr Rutherford, who had seemed perfectly well, and had visited my mother upon Tuesday the 14th, was suddenly affected with gout in his stomach, or some disease equally rapid, on Wednesday the 15th, and without

a moment's warning or complaint, fell down a dead man, almost without a single groan. You are aware of his fondness for animals; he was just stroking his cat after eating his breakfast, as usual, when, without more warning than a half-uttered exclamation, he sunk on the ground, and died in the arms of his daughter Anne. Though the Doctor had no formed complaint, yet I have thought him looking poorly for some months; and though there was no failure whatever in intellect, or anything which approached it, yet his memory was not so good, and I thought he paused during the last time he attended me, and had difficulty in recollecting the precise terms of his recipe. Certainly there was a great decay of outward strength. We were very anxious about the effect this fatal news was likely to produce on the mind and decayed health of our aunt, Miss C. Rutherford, and resolved, as her health had been gradually falling off ever since she returned from Abbotsford, that she should never learn anything of it until it was impossible to conceal it longer. But God had so ordered it that she was never to know the loss she had sustained, and which she would have felt so deeply. On Friday the 17th December, the second day after her brother's death, she expired, without a groan and without suffering, about six in the morning. And so we lost an excellent and warm-hearted relation, one of the few women I ever knew whose strength of mental faculties enabled her,

at a mature period of life, to supply the defects of an imperfect education. It is a most uncommon and afflicting circumstance, that a brother and two sisters should be taken ill the same day — that two of them should die without any rational possibility of the survivance of the third — and that no one of the three could be affected by learning the loss of the other. The Doctor was buried on Monday 20th, and Miss Rutherford this day (Wednesday 22d), in the burial-place adjoining to and surrounding one of the new Episcopal chapels,* where Robert Rutherford† had purchased a burial-ground of some extent, and parted with one half to the Russells. It is surrounded with a very high wall, and all the separate burial-grounds, five I think in number, are separated by party walls going down to the depth of twelve feet, so as to prevent the possibility either of encroachment, or of disturbing the relics of the dead. I have purchased one half of Miss Russell's interest in this sad spot, moved by its extreme seclusion, privacy, and security. When poor Jack was buried in the Greyfriars' churchyard, where my father and Anne lie,‡ I thought their graves more encroached

* St John's Chapel.

† Robert Rutherford, Esq., W. S., son to the Professor of Botany.

‡ "Our family heretofore buried in the Greyfriar's churchyard, close by the entrance to Heriot's Hospital, and on the southern or left-hand side as you pass from the churchyard." — *MS. Memorandum.*

upon than I liked to witness; and in this new place I intend to lay our poor mother when the scene shall close; so that the brother and the two sisters, whose fate has been so very closely entwined in death, may not be divided in the grave, — and this I hope you will approve of.

"*Thursday, December* 23*d.* — My mother still lingers this morning, and as her constitution is so excellent, she may perhaps continue to exist some time, or till another stroke. It is a great consolation that she is perfectly easy. All her affairs of every sort have been very long arranged for this great change, and with the assistance of Donaldson and Macculloch, you may depend, when the event takes place, that your interest will be attended to most pointedly. — I hope our civil tumults here are like to be ended by the measures of Parliament. I mentioned in my last that Kinloch of Kinloch was to be tried for sedition. He has forfeited his bail, and was yesterday laid under outlawry for non-appearance. Our neighbours in Northumberland are in a deplorable state; upwards of 50,000 blackguards are ready to rise between Tyne and Wear.* On the other hand, the Scottish frontiers are steady and loyal, and arming fast. Scott of Gala and I have offered 200 men, all fine strapping young fellows, and good marksmen, willing to go anywhere with

* This was a ridiculously exaggerated report of that period of alarm.

us. We could easily double the number. So the necessity of the times has made me get on horseback once more. Our mother has at different times been perfectly conscious of her situation, and knew every one, though totally unable to speak. She seemed to take a very affectionate farewell of me the last time I saw her, which was the day before yesterday; and as she was much agitated, Dr Keith advised I should not see her again unless she seemed to desire it, which hitherto she has not done. She sleeps constantly, and will probably be so removed. Our family sends love to yours. Yours most affectionately, WALTER SCOTT."

Scott's excellent mother died on the 24th December — the day after he closed the foregoing letter to his brother.

On the 18th, in the midst of these accumulated afflictions, the romance of Ivanhoe made its appearance. The date has been torn from the following letter, but it was evidently written while all these events were fresh and recent.

"*To the Lady Louisa Stewart, Ditton Park, Windsor.*

"Dear Lady Louisa,

"I am favoured with your letter from Ditton, and am glad you found anything to entertain you in

Ivanhoe. Novelty is what this giddy-paced time demands imperiously, and I certainly studied as much as I could to get out of the old beaten track, leaving those who like to keep the road, which I have rutted pretty well. I have had a terrible time of it this year, with the loss of dear friends and near relations; it is almost fearful to count up my losses, as they make me bankrupt in society. My brother-in-law; our never-to-be-enough regretted Duke; Lord Chief Baron, my early, kind, and constant friend, who took me up when I was a young fellow of little mark or likelihood; the wife of my intimate friend William Erskine; the only son of my friend David Hume, a youth of great promise, and just entering into life, who had grown up under my eye from childhood; my excellent mother; and, within a few days, her surviving brother and sister. My mother was the only one of these whose death was the natural consequence of very advanced life. And our sorrows are not at an end. A sister of my mother's, Mrs Russell of Ashestiel, long deceased, had left (besides several sons, of whom only one now survives and is in India) three daughters, who lived with her youngest sister, Miss Rutherford, and were in the closest habits of intimacy with us. The eldest of these girls, and a most excellent creature she is, was in summer so much shocked by the sudden news of the death of one of the brothers I have mentioned, that she was deprived of the use of her limbs

by an affection either nervous or paralytic. She was slowly recovering from this afflicting and helpless situation, when the sudden fate of her aunts and uncle, particularly of her who had acted as a mother to the family, brought on a new shock; and though perfectly possessed of her mind, she has never since been able to utter a word. Her youngest sister, a girl of one or two and twenty, was so much shocked by this scene of accumulated distress, that she was taken very ill, and having suppressed and concealed her disorder, relief came too late, and she has been taken from us also. She died in the arms of the elder sister, helpless as I have described her; and to separate the half dead from the actual corpse was the most melancholy thing possible. You can hardly conceive, dear Lady Louisa, the melancholy feeling of seeing the place of last repose belonging to the devoted family open four times within so short a space, and to meet the same group of sorrowing friends and relations on the same sorrowful occasion. Looking back on those whom I have lost, all well known to me excepting my brother-in-law, whom I could only judge of by the general report in his favour, I can scarce conceive a group possessing more real worth and amiable qualities, not to mention talents and accomplishments. I have never felt so truly what Johnson says so well—

> 'Condemn'd to Hope's delusive mine,
> As on we toil from day to day,

By sudden blasts, or slow decline,
Our social comforts drop away.' *

"I am not sure whether it was your ladyship, or the poor Duchess of Buccleuch, who met my mother once, and flattered me by being so much pleased with the good old lady. She had a mind peculiarly well stored with much acquired information and natural talent, and as she was very old, and had an excellent memory, she could draw without the least exaggeration or affectation the most striking pictures of the past age. If I have been able to do anything in the way of painting the past times, it is very much from the studies with which she presented me. She connected a long period of time with the present generation, for she remembered, and had often spoken with, a person who perfectly recollected the battle of Dunbar, and Oliver Cromwell's subsequent entry into Edinburgh. She preserved her faculties to the very day before her final illness; for our friends Mr and Mrs Scott of Harden visited her on the Sunday; and, coming to our house after, were expressing their surprise at the alertness of her mind, and the pleasure which she had in talking over both ancient and modern events. She had told them with great accuracy the real story of the Bride of Lammermuir, and pointed out wherein it differed from the novel. She had all the names of the parties, and detailed (for she was a great genealogist) their connexion

* Lines on the death of Mr Robert Levet.

with existing families. On the subsequent Monday she was struck with a paralytic affection, suffered little, and that with the utmost patience; and what was God's reward, and a great one to her innocent and benevolent life, she never knew that her brother and sister, the last thirty years younger than herself, had trodden the dark path before her. She was a strict economist, which she said enabled her to be liberal; out of her little income of about £300 a-year she bestowed at least a third in well chosen charities, and with the rest lived like a gentlewoman, and even with hospitality more general than seemed to suit her age; yet I could never prevail on her to accept of any assistance. You cannot conceive how affecting it was to me to see the little preparations of presents which she had assorted for the New Year —for she was a great observer of the old fashions of her period — and to think that the kind heart was cold which delighted in all these acts of kindly affection. I should apologize, I believe, for troubling your ladyship with these melancholy details, but you would not thank me for a letter written with constraint, and my mind is at present very full of this sad subject, though I scarce know any one to whom I would venture to say so much. I hear no good news of Lady Anne, though Lord Montagu writes cautiously. The weather is now turning milder, and may, I hope, be favourable to her complaint. After my own family, my thought most frequently turns

to these orphans, whose parents I loved an
so much.—I am always, dear Lady L
very respectful and obliged WALTER

There is in the library at Abbotsford a
of Baskerville's folio Bible, two vols., print
bridge in 1763; and there appears on the
in the trembling handwriting of Scott's m
inscription—"*To my dear son, Walter S*
his affectionate mother, Anne Rutherford,
1*st*, 1819." Under these words her son ha
as follows:—"This Bible was the gift of m
father Dr John Rutherford, to my mother,
sented by her to me; being, alas! the last g
I was to receive from that excellent parent,
I verily believe, the thing which she most
the world,—not only in humble veneration
sacred contents, but as the dearest pledge of
ther's affection to her. As such she gave it
and as such I bequeath it to those who may re
me—charging them carefully to preserve the
in memory of those to whom it has belonged. 1

If literary success could have either filled S
head or hardened his heart, we should have no
letters as those of December 1819. Ivanhoe
received throughout England with a more clam
delight than any of the *Scotch novels* had been.

61 Europe is no
very large map
is this screen

FAC-SIMILE

(three in number) were now, for the first
the post 8vo form, with a finer paper than
the press-work much more elegant, and the
dingly raised from eight shillings the
ten; yet the copies sold in this original
twelve thousand.

o have mentioned sooner, that the original
as to bring out Ivanhoe as the production
and, and that, to assist this impression,
was printed in a size and manner unlike
ing ones; but Constable, when the day
tion approached, remonstrated against this
t, and it was accordingly abandoned.

ader has already been told that Scott dic-
greater part of this romance. The portion
S. which is his own, appears, however, not
ell and firmly executed as that of any of the
my Landlord, but distinguished by having
r erasures and interlineations, and also by
a smaller hand. The fragment is beautiful
t—many pages together without one altera-
It is, I suppose, superfluous to add, that in no
did Scott re-write his prose before sending
e press. Whatever may have been the case
is poetry, the world uniformly received the
cura of the novelist.

simile of a page is given with this volume. Three of
S. pages were a fair day's work in the author's estima-
qual to 15 or 16 of the original impression.

As a work of art, Ivanhoe is perhaps the first of all Scott's efforts, whether in prose or in verse; nor have the strength and splendour of his imagination been displayed to higher advantage than in some of the scenes of this romance. But I believe that no reader who is capable of thoroughly comprehending the author's Scotch character and Scotch dialogue will ever place even Ivanhoe, as a work of genius, on the same level with Waverley, Guy Mannering, or the Heart of Mid-Lothian.

There is, to me, something so remarkably characteristic of Scott's mind and manner in a particular passage of the Introduction, which he penned ten years afterwards for this work, that I must be pardoned for extracting it here. He says—"The character of the fair Jewess found so much favour in the eyes of some fair readers, that the writer was censured, because, when arranging the fates of the characters of the drama, he had not assigned the hand of Wilfred to Rebecca, rather than the less interesting Rowena. But, not to mention that the prejudices of the age rendered such an union almost impossible, the author may, in passing, observe that he thinks a character of a highly virtuous and lofty stamp is degraded rather than exalted by an attempt to reward virtue with temporal prosperity. Such is not the recompense which providence has deemed worthy of suffering merit; and it is a dangerous and fatal doctrine to teach young persons, the most com-

mon readers of romance, that rectitude of conduct and of principle are either naturally allied with, or adequately rewarded by, the gratification of our passions, or attainment of our wishes. In a word, if a virtuous and self-denied character is dismissed with temporal wealth, greatness, rank, or the indulgence of such a rashly-formed or ill-assorted passion as that of Rebecca for Ivanhoe, the reader will be apt to say, verily Virtue has had its reward. But a glance on the great picture of life will show, that the duties of self-denial, and the sacrifice of passion to principle, are seldom thus remunerated; and that the internal consciousness of their high-minded discharge of duty produces on their own reflections a more adequate recompense, in the form of that peace which the world cannot give or take away."

The introduction of the charming Jewess and her father originated, I find, in a conversation that Scott held with his friend Skene during the severest season of his bodily sufferings in the early part of this year. "Mr Skene," says that gentleman's wife, "sitting by his bedside, and trying to amuse him as well as he could in the intervals of pain, happened to get on the subject of the Jews, as he had observed them when he spent some time in Germany in his youth. Their situation had naturally made a strong impression; for in those days they retained their own dress and manners entire, and were treated with considerable austerity by their Christian neighbours,

being still locked up at night in their own quarter by great gates; and Mr Skene, partly in seriousness, but partly from the mere wish to turn his mind at the moment upon something that might occupy and divert it, suggested that a group of Jews would be an interesting feature if he could contrive to bring them into his next novel." Upon the appearance of Ivanhoe, he reminded Mr Skene of this conversation, and said, "You will find this book owes not a little to your German reminiscences." Mrs Skene adds—"Dining with us one day, not long before Ivanhoe was begun, something that was mentioned led him to describe the sudden death of an advocate of his acquaintance, a Mr Elphinstone, which occurred in the *Outer-house* soon after he was called to the bar. It was, he said, no wonder that it had left a vivid impression on his mind, for it was the first sudden death he ever witnessed; and he now related it so as to make us all feel as if we had the scene passing before our eyes. In the death of the Templar in Ivanhoe, I recognised the very picture—I believe I may safely say the very words."*

By the way, before Ivanhoe made its appearance, I had myself been formally admitted to the author's secret; but had he favoured me with no such confidence, it would have been impossible for me to doubt that I had been present some months before at the

* See Waverley Novels, vol. xvii. p. 379.

conversation which suggested, and indeed supplied all the materials of, one of its most amusing chapters. I allude to that in which our Saxon terms for animals in the field, and our Norman equivalents for them as they appear on the table, and so on, are explained and commented on. All this Scott owed to the after-dinner talk one day in Castle Street of his old friend Mr William Clerk, — who, among other elegant pursuits, has cultivated the science of philology very deeply.

I cannot conclude this chapter without observing that the publication of Ivanhoe marks the most brilliant epoch in Scott's history as the literary favourite of his contemporaries. With the novel which he next put forth, the immediate sale of these works began gradually to decline; and though even when that had reached its lowest declension, it was still far above the most ambitious dreams of any other novelist, yet the publishers were afraid the announcement of any thing like a falling-off might cast a damp over the spirits of the author. He was allowed to remain, for several years, under the impression that whatever novel he threw off commanded at once the old triumphant sale of ten or twelve thousand, and was afterwards, when included in the collective edition, to be circulated in that shape also as widely as Waverley or Ivanhoe. In my opinion, it would have been very unwise in the booksellers to give Scott any unfavourable tidings upon such subjects after the commence-

ment of the malady which proved fatal to him,—for that from the first shook his mind; but I think they took a false measure of the man when they hesitated to tell him exactly how the matter stood, throughout 1820 and the three or four following years, when his intellect was as vigorous as it ever had been, and his heart as courageous; and I regret their scruples (among other reasons), because the years now mentioned were the most costly ones in his life; and for every twelvemonths in which any man allows himself, or is encouraged by others, to proceed in a course of unwise expenditure, it becomes proportionably more difficult for him to pull up when the mistake is at length detected or recognised.

CHAPTER XLVII.

The Visionary—The Peel of Darnick—Scott's Saturday Excursions to Abbotsford—A Sunday there in February—Constable—John Ballantyne—Thomas Purdie, &c.—Prince Gustavus Vasa—Proclamation of King George IV.—Publication of the Monastery.

1820.

In the course of December 1819 and January 1820, Scott drew up three essays, under the title of "The Visionary," upon certain popular doctrines or delusions, the spread of which at this time filled with alarm, not only Tories like him, but many persons who had been distinguished through life for their adherence to political liberalism. These papers appeared successively in James Ballantyne's Edinburgh Weekly Journal, and their parentage being obvious, they excited much attention in Scotland. Scott collected them into a pamphlet, which had also a large

circulation; and I remember his showing very particular satisfaction when he observed a mason reading it to his comrades, as they sat at their dinner, by a new house on Leith Walk. During January, however, his thoughts continued to be chiefly occupied with the details of the proposed corps of Foresters; of which, I believe it was at last settled, as far as depended on the other gentlemen concerned in it, that he should be the Major. He wrote and spoke on this subject with undiminished zeal, until the whole fell to the ground in consequence of the Government's ultimately declining to take on itself any part of the expense; a refusal which must have been fatal to any such project when the Duke of Buccleuch was a minor. He felt the disappointment keenly; but, in the meantime, the hearty alacrity with which his neighbours of all classes gave in their adhesion, had afforded him much pleasure, and, as regarded his own immediate dependants, served to rivet the bonds of affection and confidence, which were to the end maintained between him and them. Darnick had been especially ardent in the cause, and he thenceforth considered its volunteers as persons whose individual fortunes closely concerned him. I could fill many a page with the letters which he wrote at subsequent periods, with the view of promoting the success of these spirited young fellows in their various departments of industry: they were proud of their patron, as may be supposed, and he

was highly gratified, as well as amused, when he learned that,—while the rest of the world were talking of "The Great Unknown,"—his usual *sobriquet* among these villagers was "the Duke of Darnick." Already his possessions almost encircled this picturesque and thriving hamlet; and there were few things on which he had more strongly fixed his fancy than acquiring a sort of symbol of seigniory there, by becoming the purchaser of a certain then ruinous tower that predominated, with a few coeval trees, over the farm-houses and cottages of his *ducal* vassals. A letter, previously quoted, contains an allusion to this Peelhouse of Darnick; which is moreover exactly described in the novel which he had now in hand—the Monastery. The interest Scott seemed to take in the Peel awakened, however, the pride of its hereditary proprietor: and when that worthy person, who had made some money by trade in Edinburgh, resolved on fitting it up for the evening retreat of his own life, *his Grace of Darnick* was too happy to wave his pretensions.

This was a winter of uncommon severity in Scotland; and the snow lay so deep and so long as to interrupt very seriously all Scott's country operations. I find, in his letters to Laidlaw, various paragraphs expressing the concern he took in the hardships which his poor neighbours must be suffering. Thus, on the 19th of January, he says,—

" Dear Willie,

" I write by the post that you may receive the enclosed, or rather subjoined, cheque for £60, in perfect safety. This dreadful morning will probably stop Mercer.* It makes me shiver in the midst of superfluous comforts to think of the distress of others. £10 of the £60 I wish you to distribute among our poorer neighbours, so as may best aid them. I mean not only the actually indigent, but those who are, in our phrase, *ill aff.* I am sure Dr Scott† will assist you with his advice in this labour of love. I think part of the wood-money‡ too, should be given among the Abbotstown folks if the storm keeps them off work, as is like. Yours truly,

WALTER SCOTT.

" Deep, deep snow lying here. How do the good-wife and bairns? The little bodies will be half buried in snow drift."

And again, on the 25th, he writes thus:—

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* The weekly Darnick carrier.

† Dr Scott of Darnlee.—See *ante*, Vol. V. p. 372. This very amiable, modest, and intelligent friend of Sir Walter Scott's, died in 1837.

‡ Some money expected from the sale of larches.

" Dear Willie,

" I have yours with the news of the inundation, which, it seems, has done no damage. I hope *Mai* will be taken care of. He should have a bed in the kitchen, and always be called in doors after it is dark, for all the kind are savage at night. Please cause Swanston to knock him up a box, and fill it with straw from time to time. I enclose a cheque for £50 to pay accounts, &c. Do not let the poor bodies want for a £5, or even a £10, more or less.

' We'll get a blessing wi' the lave,
And never miss't.' *

" Yours, W. S."

In the course of this month, through the kindness of Mr Croker, Scott received from the late Earl Bathurst, then Colonial Secretary of State, the offer of an appointment in the civil service of the East-India Company for his second son: and this seemed at the time too good a thing not to be gratefully accepted: though the apparently increasing prosperity of his fortunes induced him, a few years afterwards, to indulge his parental feelings by throwing it up. He thus alludes to this matter in a letter to his good old friend at Jedburgh:—

* Burns—*Lines to a Mouse.*

"*To Robert Shortreed, Esq., Sheriff-Substitute of Roxburghshire, Jedburgh,*

"Edinburgh, 19th Jan. 1820.

"My Dear Sir,

"I heartily congratulate you on getting the appointment for your son William in a manner so very pleasant to your feelings, and which is, like all Whytbank does, considerate, friendly, and generous.* I am not aware that I have any friends at Calcutta, but if you think letters to Sir John Malcolm and Lieut.-Colonel Russell would serve my young friend, he shall have my best commendations to them.

"It is very odd that almost the same thing has happened to me; for about a week ago, I was surprised by a letter, saying, that an unknown friend (who since proves to be Lord Bathurst, whom I never saw or spoke with) would give my second son a writer's situation for India. Charles is two years too young for this appointment; but I do not think I am at liberty to decline an offer so advantageous, if it can be so arranged that, by exchange or otherwise, it can be kept open for him. Ever yours faithfully, WALTER SCOTT."

* "An India appointment, with the name blank, which the late Mr Pringle of Whytbank sent unsolicited, believing it might be found useful to a family where there were seven sons to provide for."—*Note, by Mr A. Shortrede.*

About the middle of February—it having been ere that time arranged that I should marry his eldest daughter in the course of the spring,—I accompanied him and part of his family on one of those flying visits to Abbotsford, with which he often indulged himself on a Saturday during term. Upon such occasions, Scott appeared at the usual hour in Court, but wearing, instead of the official suit of black, his country morning dress, green jacket and so forth, under the clerk's gown; a license of which many gentlemen of the long robe had been accustomed to avail themselves in the days of his youth—it being then considered as the authentic badge that they were lairds as well as lawyers—but which, to use the dialect of the place, had fallen into *desuetude* before I knew the Parliament House. He was, I think, one of the two or three, or at most the half dozen, who still adhered to this privilege of their order; and it has now, in all likelihood, become quite obsolete, like the ancient custom, a part of the same system, for all Scotch barristers to appear without gowns or wigs, and in coloured clothes, when upon circuit. At noon, when the Court broke up, Peter Mathieson was sure to be in attendance in the Parliament Close, and five minutes after, the gown had been tossed off, and Scott, rubbing his hands for glee, was under weigh for Tweedside. On this occasion, he was, of course, in mourning; but I have thought it worth while to preserve the circumstance of his usual Satur-

day's costume. As we proceeded, he talked without reserve of the novel of the Monastery, of which he had the first volume with him: and mentioned, what he had probably forgotten when he wrote the Introduction of 1830, that a good deal of that volume had been composed before he concluded Ivanhoe. "It was a relief," he said, "to interlay the scenery most familiar to me with the strange world for which I had to draw so much on imagination."

Next morning there appeared at breakfast John Ballantyne, who had at this time a shooting or hunting-box a few miles off in the vale of the Leader, and with him Mr Constable, his guest; and it being a fine clear day, as soon as Scott had read the Church service and one of Jeremy Taylor's sermons, we all sallied out, before noon, on a perambulation of his upland territories; Maida and the rest of the favourites accompanying our march. At starting we were joined by the constant henchman, Tom Purdie—and I may save myself the trouble of any attempt to describe his appearance, for his master has given us an inimitably true one in introducing a certain personage of his Redgauntlet:—"He was, perhaps, sixty years old; yet his brow was not much furrowed, and his jet black hair was only grizzled, not whitened, by the advance of age. All his motions spoke strength unabated; and, though rather undersized, he had very broad shoulders, was square made, thin-flanked, and apparently combined in his frame muscular strength

and activity; the last somewhat impaired, perhaps, by years, but the first remaining in full vigour. A hard and harsh countenance; eyes far sunk under projecting eye-brows, which were grizzled like his hair: a wide mouth, furnished from ear to ear with a range of unimpaired teeth of uncommon whiteness, and a size and breadth which might have become the jaws of an ogre, completed this delightful portrait." Equip this figure in Scott's cast-off green jacket, white hat, and drab trousers; and imagine that years of kind treatment, comfort, and the honest consequence of a confidential *grieve*, had softened away much of the hardness and harshness originally impressed on the visage by anxious penury and the sinister habits of a *black-fisher;*—and the Tom Purdie of 1820 stands before us.

We were all delighted to see how completely Scott had recovered his bodily vigour, and none more so than Constable, who, as he puffed and panted after him up one ravine and down another, often stopped to wipe his forehead, and remarked that "it was not every author who should lead him such a dance." But Purdie's face shone with rapture as he observed how severely the swag-bellied bookseller's activity was tasked. Scott exclaiming exultingly, though perhaps for the tenth time, "This will be a glorious spring for our trees, Tom!"—"You may say that, Shirra," quoth Tom,—and then lingering a moment for Constable—"My certy," he added, scratching

his head, "and I think it will be a grand season for *our buiks* too." But indeed Tom always talked of *our buiks* as if they had been as regular products of the soil as *our aits* and *our birks*. Having threaded, first the Hexilcleugh and then the Rhymer's Glen, we arrived at Huntly Burn, where the hospitality of the kind *Weird-Sisters*, as Scott called the Miss Fergussons, reanimated our exhausted Bibliopoles, and gave them courage to extend their walk a little further down the same famous brook. Here there was a small cottage in a very sequestered situation, by making some little additions to which Scott thought it might be converted into a suitable summer residence for his daughter and future son-in-law. The details of that plan were soon settled—it was agreed on all hands that a sweeter scene of seclusion could not be fancied. He repeated some verses of Rogers' "Wish," which paint the spot:—

> "Mine be a cot beside the hill—
> A bee-hive's hum shall soothe my ear;
> A willowy brook that turns a mill,
> With many a fall shall linger near:" &c.

But when he came to the stanza—

> "And Lucy at her wheel shall sing,
> In russet-gown and apron blue,"

he departed from the text, adding—

> "But if Bluestockings here you bring,
> The Great Unknown won't dine with you."

Johnny Ballantyne, a projector to the core, was particularly zealous about this embryo establishment. Foreseeing that he should have had walking enough ere he reached Huntly Burn, his dapper little Newmarket groom had been ordered to fetch Old Mortality thither, and now, mounted on his fine hunter, he capered about us, looking pallid and emaciated as a ghost, but as gay and cheerful as ever, and would fain have been permitted to ride over hedge and ditch to mark out the proper line of the future avenue. Scott admonished him that the country people, if they saw him at such work, would take the whole party for heathens; and clapping spurs to his horse, he left us. "The deil's in the body," quoth Tom Purdie, "he'll be ower every *yett* atween this and Turnagain, though it be the Lord's day. I wadna wonder if he were to be *ceeted* before the Session." "Be sure, Tam," cries Constable, "that ye egg on the Dominie to blaw up his father—I would na grudge a hundred miles o' gait to see the ne'er-do-weel on the stool, and neither, I'll be sworn, would the Sheriff."—"Na, na," quoth the Sheriff—"we'll let sleeping dogs be, Tam."

As we walked homeward, Scott, being a little fatigued, laid his left hand on Tom's shoulder, and leaned heavily for support, chatting to his "Sunday pony," as he called the affectionate fellow, just as freely as with the rest of the party, and Tom put in his word shrewdly and manfully, and grinned and

grunted whenever the joke chanced to be within his apprehension. It was easy to see that his heart swelled within him from the moment that the Sheriff got his collar in his gripe.

There arose a little dispute between them about what tree or trees ought to be cut down in a hedge-row that we passed, and Scott seemed somewhat ruffled with finding that some previous hints of his on that head had not been attended to. When we got into motion again, his hand was on Constable's shoulder — and Tom dropped a pace or two to the rear, until we approached a gate, when he jumped forward and opened it. "Give us a pinch of your snuff, Tom," quoth the Sheriff — Tom's mull was produced, and the hand resumed its position. I was much diverted with Tom's behaviour when we at length reached Abbotsford. There were some garden chairs on the green in front of the cottage porch. Scott sat down on one of them to enjoy the view of his new tower as it gleamed in the sunset, and Constable and I did the like. Mr Purdie remained lounging near us for a few minutes, and then asked the Sheriff "to speak a word." They withdrew together into the garden — and Scott presently rejoined us with a particularly comical expression of face. As soon as Tom was out of sight, he said — "Will ye guess what he has been saying, now? — Well, this is a great satisfaction! Tom assures me that he has thought the matter over, and *will take my advice*

about the thinning of that clump behind Captain Fergusson's."*

I must not forget that, whoever might be at Abbotsford, Tom always appeared at his master's elbow on Sunday, when dinner was over, and drank long life to the Laird and the Lady and all the good company, in a quaigh of whisky, or a tumbler of wine, according to his fancy. I believe Scott has somewhere expressed in print his satisfaction that, among all the changes of our manners, the ancient freedom of personal intercourse may still be indulged between

* I am obliged to my friend Mr Scott of Gala for reminding me of the following trait of Tom Purdie. The first time Mr John Richardson of Fludyer Street came to Abbotsford, Tom (who took him for a Southron) was sent to attend upon him while he tried for a *fish* (*i. e.* a salmon) in the neighbourhood of Melrose Bridge. As they walked thither, Tom boasted grandly of the size of the fish he had himself caught there, evidently giving the stranger no credit for much skill in the Waltonian craft. By and by, however, Richardson, who is an admirable angler, hooked a vigorous fellow, and after a beautiful exhibition of the art, landed him in safety. "A fine *fish*, Tom."—"Oo, aye, Sir," quoth Tom—"it's a bonny grilse." "A *grilse*, Tom!" says Mr R.—"it's as heavy a *salmon* as the heaviest you were telling me about." Tom showed his teeth in a smile of bitter incredulity; but while they were still debating, Lord Somerville's fisherman came up with scales in his basket, and Richardson insisted on having his victim weighed. The result was triumphant for the captor. "Weel," says Tom, letting the salmon drop on the turf—"weel, ye *are* a meikle fish, mon—and a meikle *fule* too,' (he added in a lower key) "to let yourself be kilt by an Englander." [1839.]

a master and an *out-of-doors'* servant; but in truth he kept by the old fashion even with domestic servants, to an extent which I have hardly seen practised by any other gentleman. He conversed with his coachman if he sat by him, as he often did on the box — with his footman, if he happened to be in the rumble; and when there was any very young lad in the household, he held it a point of duty to see that his employments were so arranged as to leave time for advancing his education, made him bring his copy-book once a-week to the library, and examined him as to all that he was doing. Indeed he did not confine this humanity to his own people. Any steady servant of a friend of his was soon considered as a sort of friend too, and was sure to have a kind little colloquy to himself at coming and going. With all this, Scott was a very rigid enforcer of discipline — contrived to make it thoroughly understood by all about him, that they must do their part by him as he did his by them; and the result was happy. I never knew any man so well served as he was — so carefully, so respectfully, and so silently; and I cannot help doubting if, in any department of human operations, real kindness ever compromised real dignity.

In a letter, already quoted, there occurs some mention of the Prince Gustavus Vasa, who was spending this winter in Edinburgh, and his Royal Highness's accomplished attendant, the Baron Polier. I met them frequently in Castle Street, and remember as

especially interesting the first evening that they dined there. The only portrait in Scott's Edinburgh dining-room was one of Charles XII. of Sweden, and he was struck, as indeed every one must have been, with the remarkable resemblance which the exiled Prince's air and features presented to the hero of his race. Young Gustavus, on his part, hung with keen and melancholy enthusiasm on Scott's anecdotes of the expedition of Charles Edward Stewart. The Prince, accompanied by Scott and myself, witnessed the ceremonial of the proclamation of King George IV. on the 2d of February at the Cross of Edinburgh, from a window over Mr Constable's shop in the High Street; and on that occasion also the air of sadness, that mixed in his features with eager curiosity, was very affecting. Scott explained all the details to him, not without many lamentations over the barbarity of the Auld Reekie bailies, who had removed the beautiful Gothic Cross itself, for the sake of widening the thoroughfare. The weather was fine, the sun shone bright; and the antique tabards of the heralds, the trumpet notes of *God save the King*, and the hearty cheerings of the immense uncovered multitude that filled the noble old street, produced altogether a scene of great splendour and solemnity. The Royal Exile surveyed it with a flushed cheek and a watery eye, and Scott, observing his emotion, withdrew with me to another window, whispering "Poor lad! poor lad! God help him." Later in the

season, the Prince spent a few days at Abbotsford; but I have said enough to explain some allusions in the next letter to Lord Montagu, in which Scott also adverts to several public events of January and February 1820 — the assassination of the Duke of Berri — the death of King George III. — the general election which followed the royal demise — and its more unhappy consequence, the re-agitation of the old disagreement between George IV. and his wife, who, as soon as she learned his accession to the throne, announced her resolution of returning from the Continent (where she had been leading for some years a wandering life), and asserting her rights as Queen. The Tory gentleman in whose canvass of the Selkirk boroughs Scott was now earnestly concerned, was his worthy friend, Mr Henry Monteith of Carstairs, who ultimately carried the election.

"*To the Lord Montagu, &c., Ditton Park.*

"Edinburgh, 22d February 1820.

"My Dear Lord,

"I have nothing to say, except that Selkirk has declared decidedly for Monteith, and that his calling and election seem to be sure. Roxburghshire is right and tight. Harden will not stir for Berwickshire. In short, within my sphere of observation, there is nothing which need make you regret your personal absence; and I hope my dear young

namesake and chief will not find his influence abated while he is unable to head it himself. It is but little I can do, but it shall always be done with a good will — and merits no thanks, for I owe much more to his father's memory than ever I can pay a tittle of. I often think what he would have said or wished, and, within my limited sphere, *that* will always be a rule to me while I have the means of advancing in any respect the interest of his son — certainly, if anything could increase this desire, it would be the banner being at present in your Lordship's hand. I can do little but look out a-head, but that is always something. When I look back on the house of Buccleuch, as I once knew it, it is a sad retrospect. But we must look forward, and hope for the young blossom of so goodly a tree. I think your Lordship judged quite right in carrying Walter in his place to the funeral.* He will long remember it, and may survive many occasions of the same kind, to all human appearance. — Here is a horrid business of the Duke de Berri. It was first told me yesterday by Count Itterburg (*i. e.* Prince Gustavus of Sweden, son of the ex-King), who comes to see me very often. No fairy tale could match the extravagance of such a tale being told to a private Scotch gentleman by such a narrator, his own grandfather having perished in the same manner. But our age has been

* The funeral of George III. at Windsor: the young Duke of Buccleuch was at this time at Eton.

one of complete revolution, baffling all argument and expectation. As to the King and Queen, or to use the abbreviation of an old Jacobite of my acquaintance, who, not loving to hear them so called at full length, and yet desirous to have the newspapers read to him, commanded these words always to be pronounced as the letters K. and Q. — I say then, as to the K. and the Q. I venture to think, that whichever strikes the first blow will lose the battle. The sound, well-judging, and well-principled body of the people will be much shocked at the stirring such a hateful and disgraceful question. If the K. urges it unprovoked, the public feeling will put him in the wrong; if he lets her alone, her own imprudence, and that of her hot-headed adviser Harry Brougham, will push on the discussion; and, take a fool's word for it, as Sancho says, the country will never bear her coming back, foul with the various kinds of infamy she has been stained with, to force herself into the throne. On the whole, it is a discussion most devoutly to be deprecated by those who wish well to the Royal family.

"Now for a very different subject. I have a report that there is found on the farm of Melsington, in a bog, the limb of a bronze figure, full size, with a spur on the heel. This has been reported to Mr Riddell, as Commissioner, and to me as Antiquary in chief, on the estate. I wish your lordship would permit it to be sent provisionally to Abbotsford, and

also allow me, if it shall seem really curious, to make search for the rest of the statue. Clarkson * has sent me a curious account of it; and that a Roman statue (for such it seems) of that size should be found in so wild a place, has something very irritating to the curiosity. I do not of course desire to have anything more than the opportunity of examining the relique. It may be the foundation of a set of bronzes, if stout Lord Walter should turn to *virtu*.

"Always, my dear Lord, most truly yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

The novel of the Monastery was published by Messrs Longman & Co., in the beginning of March. It appeared not in the post 8vo form of Ivanhoe, but in 3 vols. 12mo, like the earlier works of the series. In fact, a few sheets of the Monastery had been printed before Scott agreed to let Ivanhoe have "By the Author of Waverley" on its title-page; and the different shapes of the two books belonged to the abortive scheme of passing off "Mr Laurence Templeton" as a hitherto unheard-of candidate for literary success.

* Ebenezer Clarkson, Esq., a surgeon of distinguished skill at Selkirk, and through life a trusty friend and crony of the Sheriff's.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

Scott revisits London—His Portrait by Lawrence, and Bust by Chantrey—Anecdotes by Allan Cunningham—Letters to Mrs Scott, Laidlaw, &c.—His Baronetcy gazetted—Marriage of his Daughter Sophia—Letter to "the Baron of Galashiels"—Visit of Prince Gustavus Vasa at Abbotsford—Tenders of Honorary Degrees from Oxford and Cambridge—Letter to Mr Thomas Scott.

1820.

At the rising of his Court on the 12th of March, Scott proceeded to London, for the purpose of receiving his baronetcy, which he had been prevented from doing in the spring of the preceding year by his own illness, and again at Christmas by accumulated family afflictions. On his arrival in town, his son the Cornet met him; and they both established themselves at Miss Dumergue's.

One of his first visiters was Sir Thomas Lawrence, who informed him that the King had resolved to adorn the great gallery, then in progress at Windsor Castle, with portraits by his hand of his Majesty's most distinguished contemporaries; all the reigning monarchs of Europe, and their chief ministers and generals, had already sat for this purpose: on the same walls the King desired to see exhibited those of his own subjects who had attained the highest honours of literature and science — and it was his pleasure that this series should commence with Walter Scott. The portrait was of course begun immediately, and the head was finished before Scott left town. Sir Thomas has caught and fixed with admirable skill one of the loftiest expressions of Scott's countenance at the proudest period of his life: to the perfect truth of the representation, every one who ever surprised him in the act of composition at his desk, will bear witness. The expression, however, was one with which many who had seen the man often, were not familiar; and it was extremely unfortunate that Sir Thomas filled in the figure from a separate sketch after he had quitted London. When I first saw the head, I thought nothing could be better; but there was an evident change for the worse when the picture appeared in its finished state — for the rest of the person had been done on a different scale, and this neglect of proportion takes considerably from the majestic effect which the head

itself, and especially the mighty pile of forehead, had in nature. I hope one day to see a good engraving of the head alone, as I first saw it floating on a dark sea of canvass.

Lawrence told me, several years afterwards, that, in his opinion, the two greatest men he had painted were the Duke of Wellington and Sir Walter Scott; "and it was odd," said he, "that they both chose usually the same hour for sitting — seven in the morning. They were both as patient sitters as I ever had. Scott, however, was, in my case at least, a very difficult subject. I had selected what struck me as his noblest look; but when he was in the chair before me, he talked away on all sorts of subjects in his usual style, so that it cost me great pains to bring him back to solemnity, when I had to attend to anything beyond the outline of a subordinate feature. I soon found that the surest recipe was to say something that would lead him to recite a bit of poetry. I used to introduce, by hook or by crook, a few lines of Campbell or Byron — he was sure to take up the passage where I left it, or *cap* it by something better — and then — when he was, as Dryden says of one of his heroes —

> 'Made up of three parts fire — so full of heaven
> It sparkled at his eyes'—

then was my time — and I made the best use I could of it. The hardest day's-work I had with him was

once when * * * * *† accompanied him to my painting room. * * * * * was in particular gay spirits, and nothing would serve him but keeping both artist and sitter in a perpetual state of merriment by anecdote upon anecdote about poor Sheridan. The anecdotes were mostly in themselves black enough, —but the style of the *conteur* was irresistibly quaint and comical. When Scott came next, he said he was ashamed of himself for laughing so much as he listened to them; 'for truly,' quoth he, 'if the tithe was fact, * * * * * might have said to Sherry — as Lord Braxfield once said to an eloquent culprit at the bar — 'Ye're a vera clever chiel', man, but ye wad be nane the waur o' a hanging.'"

It was also during this visit to London that Scott sat to Mr (now Sir Francis) Chantrey for that bust which alone preserves for posterity the cast of expression most fondly remembered by all who ever mingled in his domestic circle. Chantrey's request that Scott would sit to him was communicated through Mr Allan Cunningham, then (as now) employed as Clerk of the Works in our great Sculptor's establishment. Mr Cunningham, in his early days, when gaining his bread as a stone-mason in Nithsdale, made a pilgrimage on foot into Edinburgh, for the sole purpose of seeing the author of Marmion as he passed along the street. He was now in posses-

† A distinguished Whig friend.

sion of a celebrity of his own, and had mentioned to his patron his purpose of calling on Scott to thank him for some kind message he had received, through a common friend, on the subject of those "Remains of Nithsdale and Galloway Song," which first made his poetical talents known to the public. Chantrey embraced this opportunity of conveying to Scott his own long-cherished ambition of modelling his head; and Scott at once assented to the flattering proposal. "It was about nine in the morning," says Mr Cunningham, "that I sent in my card to him at Miss Dumergue's in Piccadilly — it had not been gone a minute, when I heard a quick heavy step coming, and in he came, holding out both hands, as was his custom, and saying, as he pressed mine — 'Allan Cunningham, I am glad to see you.' I said something," continues Mr C., "about the pleasure I felt in touching the hand that had charmed me so much. He moved his hand, and with one of his comic smiles, said, 'Ay — and a big brown hand it is.' I was a little abashed at first: Scott saw it, and soon put me at my ease; he had the power—I had almost called it the art, but art it was not—of winning one's heart and restoring one's confidence beyond any man I ever met." Then ensued a little conversation, in which Scott complimented Allan on his ballads, and urged him to try some work of more consequence, quoting Burns's words, "for dear auld Scotland's sake;" but being engaged to breakfast in a distant

part of the town, he presently dismissed his visiter, promising to appear next day at an early hour, and submit himself to Mr Chantrey's inspection.

Chantrey's purpose had been the same as Lawrence's—to seize a poetical phasis of Scott's countenance; and he proceeded to model the head as looking upwards, gravely and solemnly. The talk that passed, meantime, had equally amused and gratified both, and fortunately, at parting, Chantrey requested that Scott would come and breakfast with him next morning before they recommenced operations in the studio. Scott accepted the invitation, and when he arrived again in Ecclestone Street, found two or three acquaintances assembled to meet him,—among others, his old friend Richard Heber. The breakfast was, as any party in Sir Francis Chantrey's house is sure to be, a gay and joyous one, and not having seen Heber in particular for several years, Scott's spirits were unusually excited by the presence of an intimate associate of his youthful days. I transcribe what follows from Mr Cunningham's Memorandum:—

"Heber made many enquiries about old friends in Edinburgh, and old books and old houses, and reminded the other of their early socialities. 'Ay,' said Mr Scott, 'I remember we once dined out together, and sat so late that when we came away the night and day were so neatly balanced, that we resolved to walk about till sunrise. The moon was not down, however, and we took advantage of her lady-

ship's lantern, and climbed to the top of Arthur's Seat; when we came down we had a rare appetite for breakfast.' — 'I remember it well,' said Heber; 'Edinburgh was a wild place in those days, — it abounded in clubs — convivial clubs.' — 'Yes,' replied Mr Scott, 'and abounds still; but the conversation is calmer, and there are no such sallies now as might be heard in other times. One club, I remember, was infested with two Kemps, father and son; when the old man had done speaking, the young one began, — and before he grew weary, the father was refreshed, and took up the song. John Clerk, during a pause, was called on for a stave; he immediately struck up in a psalm-singing tone, and electrified the club with a verse which sticks like a burr to my memory —

'Now, God Almighty judge James Kemp,
And likewise his son John,
And hang them over Hell in hemp,
And burn them in brimstone.'—

"In the midst of the mirth which this specimen of psalmody raised, John (commonly called *Jack*) Fuller, the member for Surrey, and standing jester of the House of Commons, came in. Heber, who was well acquainted with the free and joyous character of that worthy, began to lead him out by relating some festive anecdotes: Fuller growled approbation, and indulged us with some of his odd sallies; things

which he assured us 'were damned good, and true too, which was better.' Mr Scott, who was standing when Fuller came in, eyed him at first with a look grave and considerate; but as the stream of conversation flowed, his keen eye twinkled brighter and brighter; his stature increased, for he drew himself up, and seemed to take the measure of the hoary joker, body and soul. An hour or two of social chat had meanwhile induced Mr Chantrey to alter his views as to the bust, and when Mr Scott left us, he said to me privately, 'This will never do—I shall never be able to please myself with a perfectly serene expression. I must try his conversational look, take him when about to break out into some sly funny old story.' As Chantrey said this, he took a string, cut off the head of the bust, put it into its present position, touched the eyes and the mouth slightly, and wrought such a transformation upon it, that when Scott came to his third sitting, he smiled and said, 'Ay, ye're mair like yoursel now!—Why, Mr Chantrey, no witch of old ever performed such cantrips with clay as this.'"

These sittings were seven in number; but when Scott revisited London a year afterwards, he gave Chantrey several more, the bust being by that time in marble. Allan Cunningham, when he called to bid him farewell, as he was about to leave town on the present occasion, found him in court dress, preparing to kiss hands at the Levee, on being gazetted

as Baronet. "He seemed anything but at his ease," says Cunningham, "in that strange attire; he was like one in armour—the stiff cut of the coat—the large shining buttons and buckles—the lace ruffles—the queue—the sword—and the cocked hat, formed a picture at which I could not forbear smiling. He surveyed himself in the glass for a moment and burst into a hearty laugh. 'O Allan,' he said, 'O Allan, what creatures we must make of ourselves in obedience to Madam Etiquette! See'st thou not, I say, what a deformed thief this fashion is?—how giddily she turns about all the hotbloods between fourteen and five-and-thirty?'" *

Scott's baronetcy was conferred on him, not in consequence of any Ministerial suggestion, but by the King personally, and of his own unsolicited motion; and when the poet kissed his hand, he said to him—"I shall always reflect with pleasure on Sir Walter Scott's having been the first creation of my reign."

The Gazette announcing his new dignity was dated March 30, and published on the 2d of April 1820; and the Baronet, as soon afterwards as he could get away from Lawrence, set out on his return to the North; for he had such respect for the ancient prejudice (a classical as well as a Scottish one) against marrying in May, that he was anxious to have the

* *Much ado about Nothing, Act III. Scene* 3.

ceremony in which his daughter was concerned over before that unlucky month should commence. It is needless to say, that during this stay in London he had again experienced, in its fullest measure, the enthusiasm of all ranks of his acquaintance; and I shall now transcribe a few paragraphs from domestic letters, which will show, among other things, how glad he was when the hour came that restored him to his ordinary course of life.

" *To Mrs Scott, 39 Castle Street, Edinburgh.*

" Piccadilly, 20th March 1820.

" My Dear Charlotte,

" I have got a delightful plan for the addition at Abb——, which, I think, will make it quite complete, and furnish me with a handsome library, and you with a drawing-room and better bed-room, with good bed-rooms for company, &c. It will cost me a little hard work to meet the expense, but I have been a good while idle. I hope to leave this town early next week, and shall hasten back with great delight to my own household gods.

" I hope this will find you from under Dr Ross's charge. I expect to see you quite in beauty when I come down, for I assure you I have been coaxed by very pretty ladies here, and look for merry faces at home. My picture comes on, and will be a grand thing, but the sitting is a great bore. Chantrey's

bust is one of the finest things he ever did. It is quite the fashion to go to see it—there's for you. Yours, my dearest love, with the most sincere affection. WALTER SCOTT."

" To the Same.

" March 27, Piccadilly.

" My Dear Charlotte,

" I have the pleasure to say that Lord Sidmouth has promised to dismiss me in all my honours by the 30th, so that I can easily be with you by the end of April; and you and Sophia may easily select the 28th, 29th, or 30th, for the ceremony. I have been much fêted here, as usual, and had a very quiet dinner at Mr Arbuthnot's yesterday with the Duke of Wellington, where Walter heard the great Lord in all his glory talk of war and Waterloo. Here is a hellish—yes, literally a hellish bustle. My head turns round with it. The whole mob of the Middlesex blackguards pass through Piccadilly twice a-day, and almost drive me mad with their noise and vociferation.* Pray do, my dear Charlotte, write soon. You know those at a distance are always anxious to hear from home. I beg you to say what would give you pleasure that I could bring from this place, and

* The general election was going on.

whether you want any thing from Mrs Arthur for yourself, Sophia, or Anne; also what would please little Charles. You know you may stretch a point on this occasion. Richardson says your honours will be gazetted on Saturday; certainly very soon, as the King, I believe, has signed the warrant. When, or how I shall see him, is not determined, but I suppose I shall have to go to Brighton. My best love attends the girls, little Charles, and all the quadrupeds.

"I conclude that the marriage will take place in Castle Street, and want to know where they go, &c. All this you will have to settle without my wise head; but I shall be terribly critical — so see you do all right. I am always, dearest Charlotte, most affectionately yours, WALTER SCOTT."

("For the Lady Scott of Abbotsford — to be.")

"*To Mr James Ballantyne, Printer, St John's Street, Edinburgh.*

"28th March, 96 Piccadilly.

"Dear James,

"I am much obliged by your attentive letter. Unquestionably Longman & Co. sell their books at subscription price, because they have the first of the market, and only one-third of the books; so that, as they say with us, 'let them care that come ahint.' This I knew and foresaw, and the ragings of the booksellers, considerably aggravated by the displeasure

of Constable and his house, are ridiculous enough; and as to their injuring the work, if it have a principle of locomotion in it, they cannot stop it—if it has not, they cannot make it move. I care not a bent twopence about their quarrels; only I say now, as I always said, that Constable's management is best, both for himself and the author; and, had we not been controlled by the narrowness of discount, I would put nothing past him. I agree with the public in thinking the work not very interesting; but it was written with as much care as the others—that is, with no care at all; and,

'If it is na weil bobbit, we'll bobb it again.'

"On these points I am Atlas. I cannot write much in this bustle of engagements, with Sir Francis's mob hollowing under the windows. I find that even this light composition demands a certain degree of silence, and I might as well live in a cotton-mill. Lord Sidmouth tells me I will obtain leave to quit London by the 30th, which will be delightful news, for I find I cannot bear late hours and great society so well as formerly; and yet it is a fine thing to hear politics talked of by Ministers of State, and war discussed by the Duke of Wellington.

"My occasions here will require that John or you send me two notes payable at Coutts' for £300 each, at two and three months' date. I will write to Constable for one at £350, which will settle my affairs

here — which, with fees and other matters, come, as you may think, pretty heavy. Let the bills be drawn payable at Coutts', and sent without delay. I will receive them safe if sent under Mr Freeling's cover. Mention particularly what you are doing, for now is your time to push miscellaneous work. Pray take great notice of inaccuracies in the Novels. They are very very many — some mine, I dare say — but all such as you may and ought to correct. If you would call on William Erskine (who is your well-wisher, and a little mortified he never sees you), he would point out some of them.

" Do you ever see Lockhart? You should consult him on every doubt where you would refer to me if present. Yours very truly, W. S.

" You say nothing of John, yet I am anxious about him."

" *To Mr Laidlaw, Kaeside, Melrose.*

" London, April 2, 1820.

" Dear Willie,

" I had the great pleasure of your letter, which carries me back to my own braes, which I love so dearly, out of this place of bustle and politics. When I can see my Master — and thank him for many acts of favour — I think I will bid adieu to London for ever; for neither the hours nor the society suit me

so well as a few years since. There is too much necessity for exertion, too much brilliancy and excitation from morning till night.

"I am glad the sheep are away, though at a loss. I should think the weather rather too dry for planting, judging by what we have here. Do not let Tom go on sticking in plants to no purpose—better put in firs in a rainy week in August. Give my service to him. I expect to be at Edinburgh in the end of this month, and to get a week at Abbotsford before the Session sits down. I think you are right to be in no hurry to let Broomielees. There seems no complaint of wanting money here just now, so I hope things will come round.—Ever yours, truly,

WALTER SCOTT."

"*To Miss Scott, Castle Street, Edinburgh.*

"London, April 3, 1820.

"Dear Sophia,

"I have no letter from any one at home excepting Lockhart, and he only says you are all well; and I trust it is so. I have seen most of my old friends, who are a little the worse for the wear, like myself. A five years' march down the wrong side of the hill tells more than ten on the right side. Our good friends here are kind as kind can be, and no frumps. They lecture the Cornet a little, which he takes with becoming deference and good humour.

There is a certain veil of Flanders lace floating in the wind for a certain occasion, from a certain godmother, but that is more than a dead secret.

"We had a very merry day yesterday at Lord Melville's, where we found Lord Huntly* and other friends, and had a bumper to the new Baronet, whose name was Gazetted that evening. Lady Huntly plays Scotch tunes like a Highland angel. She ran a set of variations on 'Kenmure's on and awa',' which I told her were enough to raise a whole country-side. I never in my life heard such fire thrown into that sort of music. I am now laying anchors to windward, as John Ferguson says, to get Walter's leave extended. We saw the D. of York, who was very civil, but wants altogether the courtesy of the King. I have had a very gracious message from the King. He is expected up very soon, so I don't go to Brighton, which is so far good. I fear his health is not strong. Meanwhile all goes forward for the Coronation. The expense of the robes for the peers may amount to £400 a-piece. All the ermine is bought up at the most extravagant prices. I hear so much of it, that I really think, like Beau Tibbs,† I shall be tempted to come up and see it, if possible. Indeed, I don't see why I should not stay here, as I seem to be forgotten at home. The people here are like to smother me with kind-

* The late Duke of Gordon.

† See Goldsmith's *Citizen of the World*, No. 105.

ness, so why should I be in a great hurry to leave them?

"I write, wishing to know what I could bring Anne and you and mamma down that would be acceptable; and I shall be much obliged to you to put me up to that matter. To little Charles also I promised something, and I wish to know what he would like. I hope he pays attention to Mr Thompson, to whom remember my best compliments. I hope to get something for him soon.

"To-day I go to spend my Sabbath quietly with Joanna Baillie and John Richardson, at Hampstead. The long Cornet goes with me. I have kept him amongst the seniors—nevertheless he seems pretty well amused. He is certainly one of the best-conditioned lads I ever saw, in point of temper.

"I understand you and Anne have gone through the ceremony of confirmation. Pray write immediately, and let me know how you are all going on, and what you would like to have, all of you. You know how much I would like to please you. Yours, most affectionately, WALTER SCOTT."

While Scott remained in London, the Professorship of Moral Philosophy in the University of Edinburgh became vacant by the death of Dr Thomas Brown; and among others who proposed themselves as candidates to fill it was the author of the Isle of Palms. He was opposed in the Town Council (who

are the patrons of most of the Edinburgh chairs), on various pretences, but solely, in fact, on party grounds, certain humorous political pieces having much exacerbated the Whigs of the North against him; and I therefore wrote to Scott, requesting him to animate the Tory Ministers in his behalf. Sir Walter did so, and Mr Wilson's canvass was successful. The answer to my communication was in these terms: —

"*To J. G. Lockhart, Esq., Great King Street, Edinburgh.*

"London, 30th March 1820.

"Dear Lockhart,

"I have yours of the Sunday morning, which has been terribly long of coming. There needed no apology for mentioning anything in which I could be of service to Wilson; and, so far as good words and good wishes *here* can do, I think he will be successful; but the battle must be fought in Edinburgh. You are aware that the only point of exception to Wilson may be, that, with the fire of genius, he has possessed some of its eccentricities;—but, did he ever approach to those of Henry Brougham, who is the god of Whiggish idolatry? If the high and rare qualities with which he is invested are to be thrown aside as useless, because they may be clouded by a few grains of dust which he can blow aside at plea-

sure, it is less a punishment on Mr Wilson than on the country. I have little doubt he would consider success in this weighty matter as a pledge for binding down his acute and powerful mind to more regular labour than circumstances have hitherto required of him, for indeed, without doing so, the appointment could in no point of view answer his purpose. He must stretch to the oar for his own credit as well as that of his friends; and if he does so, there can be no doubt that his efforts will be doubly blessed, in reference both to himself and to public utility. He must make every friend he can amongst the council. Palladio Johnstone should not be omitted. If my wife canvasses him, she may do some good.*

"You must, of course, recommend to Wilson great temper in his canvass—for wrath will do no good. After all, he must leave off sack, purge and live cleanly as a gentleman ought to do; otherwise people will compare his present ambition to that of Sir Terry O'Fag when he wished to become a judge. 'Our pleasant follies are made the whips to scourge

* Mr Robert Johnston, a grocer on a large scale on the North Bridge of Edinburgh, and long one of the leading Bailies, was about this time the prominent patron of some architectural novelties in Auld Reekie, which had found no favour with Scott;—hence his prænomen of *Palladio*—which he owed, I believe, to a song in Blackwood's Magazine. The good Bailie had been at the High School with Sir Walter, and their friendly intercourse was never interrupted but by death.

us,' as Lear says; for otherwise what could possibly stand in the way of his nomination? I trust it will take place, and give him the consistence and steadiness which are all he wants to make him the first man of the age.

"I am very angry with Castle Street—not a soul has written me, save yourself, since I came to London. Yours very truly, WALTER SCOTT."

Sir Walter, accompanied by the Cornet, reached Edinburgh late in April, and on the 29th of that month he gave me the hand of his daughter Sophia. The wedding, *more Scotico*, took place in the evening; and adhering on all such occasions to ancient modes of observance with the same punctiliousness which he mentions as distinguishing his worthy father, he gave a jolly supper afterwards to all the friends and connexions of the young couple.

His excursions to Tweedside during Term-time were, with very rare exceptions, of the sort which I have described in the preceding chapter; but he departed from his rule about this time in honour of the Swedish Prince, who had expressed a wish to see Abbotsford before leaving Scotland, and assembled a number of his friends and neighbours to meet his Royal Highness. Of the invitations which he distributed on this occasion I insert one specimen—that addressed to Mr Scott of Gala.

"*To the Baron of Galashiels*
"*The Knight of Abbotsford sends greeting.*

"Trusty and well beloved—Whereas Gustavus, Prince Royal of Sweden, proposeth to honour our poor house of Abbotsford with his presence on Thursday next, and to repose himself there for certain days, We do heartily pray you, out of the love and kindness which is and shall abide betwixt us, to be aiding to us at this conjuncture, and to repair to Abbotsford with your lady, either upon Thursday or Friday, as may best suit your convenience and pleasure, looking for no denial at your hands. Which loving countenance we will, with all thankfulness, return to you at your mansion of Gala. The hour of appearance being five o'clock, we request you to be then and there present, as you love the honour of the name; and so advance banners in the name of God and St Andrew. WALTER SCOTT."

Given at Edinburgh,
20th May 1820."

The visit of Count Itterburg is alluded to in this letter to the Cornet, who had now rejoined his regiment in Ireland. It appears that on reaching headquarters he had found a charger *hors de combat.*

" *To Walter Scott, Esq.*, 18*th Hussars, Cork.*

" Castle Street, May 31, 1820.

" Dear Walter,

" I enclose the cheque for the allowance; pray take care to get good notes in exchange. You had better speak to the gentleman whom Lord Shannon introduced you to, for, when banks take a-breaking, it seldom stops with the first who go. I am very sorry for your loss. You must be economical for a while, and bring yourself round again, for at this moment I cannot so well assist as I will do by and by. So do not buy anything but what you *need.*

" I was at Abbotsford for three days last week, to receive Count Itterburg, who seemed very happy while with us, and was much affected when he took his leave. I am sorry for him — his situation is a very particular one, and his feelings appear to be of the kindest order. When he took leave of me, he presented me with a beautiful seal, with all our new blazonries cut on a fine amethyst; and what I thought the prettiest part, on one side of the setting is cut my name, on the other the Prince's — *Gustaf.* He is to travel through Ireland, and will probably be at Cork. You will, of course, ask the Count and Baron to mess, and offer all civilities in your power, in which, I dare say, Colonel Murray will readily join. They intend to enquire after you.

"I have bought the land adjoining to the Burnfoot cottage, so that we now march with the Duke of Buccleuch all the way round that course. It cost me £2300 — but there is a great deal of valuable fir planting, which you may remember; fine roosting for the black game. Still I think it is £200 too dear, but Mr Laidlaw thinks it can be made worth the money, and it rounds the property off very handsomely. You cannot but remember the ground; it lies under the Eildon, east of the Chargelaw.

"Mamma, Anne, and Charles are all well. Sophia has been complaining of a return of her old sprain. I told her Lockhart would return her on our hands as not being sound wind and limb.

"I beg you to look at your French, and have it much at heart that you should study German. Believe me, always affectionately yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

In May 1820, Scott received from both the English Universities the highest compliment which it was in their power to offer him. The Vice-Chancellors of Oxford and Cambridge communicated to him, in the same week, their request that he would attend at the approaching Commemorations, and accept the honorary degree of Doctor in Civil Law. It was impossible for him to leave Scotland again that season; and on various subsequent renewals of the same flattering proposition from either body, he was pre-

vented, by similar circumstances, from availing himself of their distinguished kindness.

In the course of a few months Scott's family arrangements had undergone, as we have seen, considerable alteration. Meanwhile he continued anxious to be allowed to adopt, as it were, the only son of his brother Thomas; and the letter, in consequence of which that promising youth was at last committed to his charge, contains so much matter likely to interest parents and guardians, that, though long, I cannot curtail it.

"*To Thomas Scott, Esq., Paymaster 70th Regiment.*

"Abbotsford, 23d July 1820.

"My Dear Tom,

"Your letter of May, this day received, made me truly happy, being the first I have received from you since our dear mother's death, and the consequent breaches which fate has made in our family. My own health continues quite firm, at no greater sacrifice than bidding adieu to our old and faithful friend John Barleycorn, whose life-blood has become a little too heavy for my stomach. I wrote to you from London concerning the very handsome manner in which the King behaved to me in conferring my *petit titre*, and also of Sophia's intended marriage, which took place in the end of April, as we intended.

I got Walter's leave prolonged, that he might be present, and I assure you that, when he attended at the ceremony in full regimentals, you have scarce seen a handsomer young man. He is about six feet and an inch, and perfectly well made. Lockhart seems to be everything I could wish, and as they have enough to live easily upon for the present, and good expectations for the future, life opens well with them. They are to spend their vacations in a nice little cottage, in a glen belonging to this property, with a rivulet in front, and a grove of trees on the east side to keep away the cold wind. It is about two miles distant from this house, and a very pleasant walk reaches to it through my plantations, which now occupy several hundred acres. Thus there will be space enough betwixt the old man of letters and the young one. Charles's destination to India is adjourned till he reaches the proper age — it seems he cannot hold a writership until he is sixteen years old, and then is admitted to study for two years at Hertford College.

"After my own sons, my most earnest and anxious wish will be, of course, for yours, — and with this view I have pondered well what you say on the subject of your Walter; and whatever line of life you may design him for, it is scarce possible but that I can be of considerable use to him. Before fixing, however, on a point so very important, I would have you consult the nature of the boy himself. I do not

mean by this that you should ask his opinion, because at so early an age a well bred up child naturally takes up what is suggested to him by his parents; but I think you should consider, with as much impartiality as a parent can, his temper, disposition, and qualities of mind and body. It is not enough that you think there is an opening for him in one profession rather than another, — for it were better to sacrifice the fairest prospects of that kind than to put a boy into a line of life for which he is not calculated. If my nephew is steady, cautious, fond of a sedentary life and quiet pursuits, and at the same time a proficient in arithmetic, and with a disposition towards the prosecution of its highest branches, he cannot follow a better line than that of an accountant. It is highly respectable — and is one in which, with attention and skill, aided by such opportunities as I may be able to procure for him, he must ultimately succeed. I say ultimately — because the harvest is small and the labourers numerous in this as in other branches of our legal practice; and whoever is to dedicate himself to them, must look for a long and laborious tract of attention ere he reaches the reward of his labours. If I live, however, I will do all I can for him, and see him put under a proper person, taking his 'prentice fee, &c. upon myself. But if, which may possibly be the case, the lad has a decided turn for active life and adventure, is high-spirited, and impatient of long and dry labour, with some of those feelings not

unlikely to result from having lived all his life in a camp or a barrack, do not deceive yourself, my dear brother — you will never make him an accountant; you will never be able to convert such a sword into a pruning-hook, merely because you think a pruning-hook the better thing of the two. In this supposed case, your authority and my recommendation might put him into an accountant's office; but it would be just to waste the earlier years of his life in idleness, with all the temptations to dissipation which idleness gives way to; and what sort of a place a writing-chamber is, you cannot but remember. So years might wear away, and at last the youth starts off from his profession, and becomes an adventurer too late in life, and with the disadvantage, perhaps, of offended friends and advanced age standing in the way of his future prospects.

"This is what I have judged fittest in my own family, for Walter would have gone to the Bar had I liked; but I was sensible (with no small reluctance did I admit the conviction) that I should only spoil an excellent soldier to make a poor and undistinguished gownsman. On the same principle I shall send Charles to India — not, God knows, with my will, for there is little chance of my living to see him return; but merely that, judging by his disposition, I think the voyage of his life might be otherwise lost in shallows. He has excellent parts, but they are better calculated for intercourse with the world than

for hard and patient study. Having thus sent one son abroad from my family, and being about to send off the other in due time, you will not, I am sure, think that I can mean disregard to your parental feelings in stating what I can do for your Walter. Should his temper and character incline for active life, I think I can promise to get him a cadetship in the East-India Company's service; so soon as he has had the necessary education, I will be at the expense of his equipment and passage-money; and when he reaches India, there he is completely provided, secure of a competence if he lives, and with great chance of a fortune if he thrives. I am aware this would be a hard pull at Mrs Scott's feelings and yours; but recollect your fortune is small, and the demands on it numerous, and pagodas and rupees are no bad things. I can get Walter the first introductions, and if he behaves himself as becomes your son, and my nephew, I have friends enough in India, and of the highest class, to ensure his success, even his rapid success—always supposing my recommendations to be seconded by his own conduct. If, therefore, the youth has anything of your own spirit, for God's sake do not condemn him to a drudgery which he will never submit to—and remember, to sacrifice his fortune to your fondness will be sadly mistaken affection. As matters stand, unhappily you must be separated; and considering the advantages of India, the mere circumstance of distance is completely coun-

terbalanced. Health is what will naturally occur to Mrs Scott; but the climate of India is now well understood, and those who attend to ordinary precautions live as healthy as in Britain. And so I have said my say. Most heartily will I do my best in any way you may ultimately decide for; and as the decision really ought to turn on the boy's temper and disposition, you must be a better judge by far than any one else. But if he should resemble his father and uncle in certain indolent habits, I fear he will make a better subject for an animating life of enterprise than for the technical labour of an accountant's desk. There is no occasion, fortunately, for forming any hasty resolution. When you send him here I will do all that is in my power to stand in the place of a father to him, and you may fully rely on my care and tenderness. If he should ultimately stay at Edinburgh, as both my own boys leave me, I am sure I shall have great pleasure in having the nearest in blood after them with me. Pray send him as soon as you can, for at his age, and under imperfect opportunities of education, he must have a good deal to make up. I wish I could be of the same use to you which I am sure I can be to your son.

"Of public news I have little to send. The papers will tell you the issue of the Radical row for the present. The yeomanry behaved most gallantly. There is in Edinburgh a squadron as fine as ours was—all young men, and zealous soldiers. They

made the western campaign with the greatest spirit, and had some hard and fatiguing duty, long night-marches, surprises of the enemy, and so forth, but no fight, for the whole Radical plot went to the devil when it came to gun and sword. Scarce any blood was shed, except in a trifling skirmish at Bonnymuir, near Carron. The rebels were behind a wall, and fired on ten hussars and as many yeomen —the latter under command of a son of James Davidson, W.S. The cavalry cleared the wall, and made them prisoners to a man. The Commission of Oyer and Terminer is now busy trying them and others. The Edinburgh young men showed great spirit; all took arms, and my daughters say (I was in London at the time), that not a feasible-looking beau was to be had for love or money. Several were like old Beardie; they would not shave their moustaches till the Radicals were put down, and returned with most awful whiskers. Lockhart is one of the cavalry, and a very good trooper. It is high to hear these young fellows talk of the Raid of Airdrie, the trot of Kilmarnock, and so on, like so many moss-troopers.

"The Queen is making an awful bustle, and though by all accounts her conduct has been most abandoned and beastly, she has got the whole mob for her partisans, who call her injured innocence, and what not. She has courage enough to dare the worst, and a most decided desire to be revenged of

him, which, by the way, can scarce be wondered at. If she had as many followers of high as of low degree (in proportion), and funds to equip them, I should not be surprised to see her fat bottom in a pair of buckskins, and at the head of an army— God mend all. The things said of her are beyond all usual profligacy. Nobody of any fashion visits her. I think myself monstrously well clear of London and its intrigues, when I look round my green fields, and recollect I have little to do, but to

> ——— 'make my grass mow,
> And my apple tree grow.'

"I beg my kind love to Mrs Huxley. I have a very acceptable letter from her, and I trust to retain the place she promises me in her remembrance. Sophia will be happy to hear from Uncle Tom, when Uncle Tom has so much leisure. My best compliments attend your wife and daughters, not forgetting Major Huxley and Walter. My dear Tom, it will be a happy moment when circumstances shall permit us a meeting on this side Jordan, as Tabitha says, to talk over old stories, and lay new plans. So many things have fallen out which I had set my heart upon strongly, that I trust this may happen amongst others.—Believe me, yours very affectionately,

WALTER SCOTT."*

* Here ended Vol. IV. of the Original Edition. [1839.]

CHAPTER XLIX.

Autumn at Abbotsford—Scott's Hospitality—Visit of Sir Humphry Davy, Henry Mackenzie, Dr Wollaston, and William Stewart Rose—Coursing on Newark Hill—Salmon-fishing—The Festival at Boldside—The Abbotsford Hunt—The Kirn, &c.

1820.

About the middle of August, my wife and I went to Abbotsford; and we remained there for several weeks, during which I became familiarized to Sir Walter Scott's mode of existence in the country. It was necessary to observe it, day after day, for a considerable period, before one could believe that such was, during nearly half the year, the routine of life with the most productive author of his age. The humblest person who stayed merely for a short visit, must have departed with the impression that what he witnessed was an occasional variety; that Scott's

courtesy prompted him to break in upon his habits when he had a stranger to amuse; but that it was physically impossible that the man who was writing the Waverley romances at the rate of nearly twelve volumes in the year, could continue, week after week, and month after month, to devote all but a hardly perceptible fraction of his mornings to out-of-doors' occupations, and the whole of his evenings to the entertainment of a constantly varying circle of guests.

The hospitality of his afternoons must alone have been enough to exhaust the energies of almost any man; for his visiters did not mean, like those of country houses in general, to enjoy the landlord's good cheer and amuse each other; but the far greater proportion arrived from a distance, for the sole sake of the Poet and Novelist himself, whose person they had never before seen, and whose voice they might never again have any opportunity of hearing. No other villa in Europe was ever resorted to from the same motives, and to anything like the same extent, except Ferney; and Voltaire never dreamt of being visible to his *hunters*, except for a brief space of the day; few of them even dined with him, and none of them seem to have slept under his roof. Scott's establishment, on the contrary, resembled in every particular that of the affluent idler, who, because he has inherited, or would fain transmit, political influence in some province, keeps open house — receives

as many as he has room for, and sees their apartments occupied, as soon as they vacate them, by another troop of the same description. Even on gentlemen guiltless of inkshed, the exercise of hospitality upon this sort of scale is found to impose a heavy tax; few of them, nowadays, think of maintaining it for any large portion of the year: very few indeed below the highest rank of the nobility—in whose case there is usually a staff of led-captains, led-chaplains, servile dandies, and semi-professional talkers and jokers from London, to take the chief part of the burden. Now, Scott had often in his mouth the pithy verses—

> "Conversation is but carving:—
> Give no more to every guest,
> Than he's able to digest;
> Give him always of the prime,
> And but little at a time;
> Carve to all but just enough,
> Let them neither starve nor stuff;
> *And that you may have your due,*
> *Let your neighbours carve for you:*"—

and he, in his own familiar circle always, and in other circles where it was possible, furnished a happy exemplification of these rules and regulations of the Dean of St Patrick's. But the same sense and benevolence which dictated adhesion to them among his old friends and acquaintance, rendered it necessary to break them, when he was receiving strangers of

the class I have described above at Abbotsford: he felt that their coming was the best homage they could pay to his celebrity, and that it would have been as uncourteous in him not to give them their fill of his talk, as it would be in your every-day lord of manors to make his casual guests welcome indeed to his venison, but keep his grouse-shooting for his immediate allies and dependants.

Every now and then he received some stranger who was not indisposed to take his part in the *carving;* and how good-humouredly he surrendered the lion's share to any one that seemed to covet it—with what perfect placidity he submitted to be bored even by bores of the first water, must have excited the admiration of many besides the daily observers of his proceedings. I have heard a spruce Senior Wrangler lecture him for half an evening on the niceties of the Greek epigram; I have heard the poorest of all parliamentary blunderers try to detail to him the *pros* and *cons* of what he called the *Truck System;* and in either case the same bland eye watched the lips of the tormentor. But, with such ludicrous exceptions, Scott was the one object of the Abbotsford pilgrims; and evening followed evening only to show him exerting, for their amusement, more of animal spirits, to say nothing of intellectual vigour, than would have been considered by any other man in the company as sufficient for the whole expenditure of a week's existence. Yet this

was not the chief marvel; he talked of things that interested himself, because he knew that by doing so he should give most pleasure to his guests; but how vast was the range of subjects on which he could talk with unaffected zeal; and with what admirable delicacy of instinctive politeness did he select his topic according to the peculiar history, study, pursuits or social habits of the stranger! How beautifully he varied his style of letter-writing, according to the character and situation of his multifarious correspondents, the reader has already been enabled to judge; but to carry the same system into practice *at sight* — to manage utter strangers, of many and widely different classes, in the same fashion, and with the same effect — called for a quickness of observation, and fertility of resource, such as no description can convey the slightest notion of to those who never witnessed the thing for themselves. And all this was done without approach to the unmanly trickery of what is called *catching the tone* of the person one converses with. Scott took the subject on which he thought such a man or woman would like best to hear him speak — but not to handle it in their way, or in any way but what was completely, and most simply his own; — not to flatter them by embellishing, with the illustration of his genius, the views and opinions which they were supposed to entertain, — but to let his genius play out its own variations, for his own delight and theirs, as freely

and easily, and with as endless a multiplicity of delicious novelties, as ever the magic of Beethoven or Mozart could fling over the few primitive notes of a village air.

It is the custom in some, perhaps in many country houses, to keep a register of the guests, and I have often regretted that nothing of the sort was ever attempted at Abbotsford. It would have been a curious record — especially if so contrived — (as I have seen done) — that the names of each day should, by their arrangement on the page, indicate the exact order in which the company sat at dinner. It would hardly, I believe, be too much to affirm, that Sir Walter Scott entertained, under his roof, in the course of the seven or eight brilliant seasons when his prosperity was at its height, as many persons of distinction in rank, in politics, in art, in literature, and in science, as the most princely nobleman of his age ever did in the like space of time. — I turned over, since I wrote the preceding sentence, Mr Lodge's compendium of the British Peerage, and on summing up the titles which suggested *to myself* some reminiscence of this kind, I found them nearly as one out of six. — I fancy it is not beyond the mark to add, that of the eminent foreigners who visited our island within this period, a moiety crossed the Channel mainly in consequence of the interest with which his writings had invested Scotland — and that the hope of beholding the man

under his own roof was the crowning motive with half that moiety. As for countrymen of his own, like him ennobled, in the higher sense of that word, by the display of their intellectual energies, if any one such contemporary can be pointed out as having crossed the Tweed, and yet not spent a day at Abbotsford, I shall be surprised.

It is needless to add, that Sir Walter was familiarly known, long before the days I am speaking of, to almost all the nobility and higher gentry of Scotland; and consequently, that there seldom wanted a fair proportion of them to assist him in doing the honours of his country. It is still more superfluous to say so respecting the heads of his own profession at Edinburgh: *Sibi et amicis* — Abbotsford was their villa whenever they pleased to resort to it, and few of them were ever absent from it long. He lived meanwhile in a constant interchange of easy visits with the gentlemen's families of Teviotdale and the Forest; so that, mixed up with his superfine admirers of the Mayfair breed, his staring worshippers from foreign parts, and his quick-witted coevals of the Parliament-House — there was found generally some hearty homespun laird, with his dame — the young laird — a bashful bumpkin, perhaps, whose ideas did not soar beyond his gun and pointer — or perhaps a little pseudo-dandy, for whom the Kelso race-course and the Jedburgh ball were "Life," and "the World;" and not forgetting a

brace of "Miss Rawbolds," * in whom, as their mamma prognosticated, some of Sir Walter's young Waverleys or Osbaldistones might peradventure discover a Flora MacIvor or a Die Vernon. To complete the *olla podrida*, we must remember that no old acquaintance, or family connexions, however remote their actual station or style of manners from his own, were forgotten or lost sight of. He had some, even near relations, who, except when they visited him, rarely, if ever, found admittance to what the haughty dialect of the upper world is pleased to designate exclusively as *society*. These were welcome guests, let who might be under that roof; and it was the same with many a worthy citizen of Edinburgh, habitually moving in the obscurest of circles, who had been in the same class with Scott at the High School, or his fellow-apprentice when he was proud of earning threepence a-page by the use of his pen. To dwell on nothing else, it was surely a beautiful perfection of real universal humanity and politeness, that could enable this great and good man to blend guests so multifarious in one group, and contrive to make them all equally happy with him, with themselves, and with each other.

I remember saying to William Allan one morning

* "There were the six Miss Rawbolds — pretty dears!
All song and sentiment; whose hearts were set
Less on a convent than a coronet."
Don Juan — C. XIII. St. 85.

as the whole party mustered before the porch after breakfast, "A faithful sketch of what you at this moment see would be more interesting a hundred years hence, than the grandest so-called historical picture that you will ever exhibit in Somerset-House;" and my friend agreed with me so cordially, that I often wondered afterwards he had not attempted to realize the suggestion. The subject ought, however, to have been treated conjointly by him (or Wilkie) and Edwin Landseer. It was a clear, bright September morning, with a sharpness in the air that doubled the animating influence of the sunshine, and all was in readiness for a grand coursing match on Newark Hill. The only guest who had chalked out other sport for himself was the stanchest of anglers, Mr Rose; but he, too, was there on his *shelty*, armed with his salmon-road and landing-net, and attended by his humorous squire Hinves, and Charlie Purdie, a brother of Tom, in those days the most celebrated fisherman of the district. This little group of Waltonians, bound for Lord Somerville's preserve, remained lounging about to witness the start of the main cavalcade. Sir Walter, mounted on Sibyl, was marshalling the order of procession with a huge hunting-whip; and among a dozen frolicsome youths and maidens, who seemed disposed to laugh at all discipline, appeared, each on horseback, each as eager as the youngest sportsman in the troop, Sir Humphry Davy, Dr Wollaston, and the patriarch of Scottish

belles-lettres, Henry Mackenzie. The Man of Feeling, however, was persuaded with some difficulty to resign his steed for the present to his faithful negro follower, and to join Lady Scott in the sociable, until we should reach the ground of our *battue*. Laidlaw, on a long-tailed wiry Highlander, yclept *Hoddin Grey*, which carried him nimbly and stoutly, although his feet almost touched the ground as he sat, was the adjutant. But the most picturesque figure was the illustrious inventor of the safety-lamp. He had come for his favourite sport of angling, and had been practising it successfully with Rose, his travelling companion, for two or three days preceding this, but he had not prepared for coursing fields, or had left Charlie Purdie's troop for Sir Walter's on a sudden thought; and his fisherman's costume—a brown hat with flexible brims, surrounded with line upon line, and innumerable fly-hooks—jack-boots worthy of a Dutch smuggler, and a fustian surtout dabbled with the blood of salmon, made a fine contrast with the smart jackets, white-cord breeches, and well polished jockey-boots of the less distinguished cavaliers about him. Dr Wollaston was in black, and with his noble serene dignity of countenance, might have passed for a sporting archbishop. Mr Mackenzie, at this time in the 76th year of his age, with a white hat turned up with green, green spectacles, green jacket, and long brown leathern gaiters buttoned upon his nether anatomy, wore a dog-

whistle round his neck, and had all over the air of as resolute a devotee as the gay captain of Huntly Burn. Tom Purdie and his subalterns had preceded us by a few hours with all the greyhounds that could be collected at Abbotsford, Darnick, and Melrose; but the giant Maida had remained as his master's orderly, and now gambolled about Sibyl Grey, barking for mere joy like a spaniel puppy.

The order of march had been all settled, and the sociable was just getting under weigh, when *the Lady Anne* broke from the line, screaming with laughter, and exclaimed, "Papa, papa, I knew you could never think of going without your pet." Scott looked round, and I rather think there was a blush as well as a smile upon his face, when he perceived a little black pig frisking about his pony, and evidently a self-elected addition to the party of the day. He tried to look stern, and cracked his whip at the creature, but was in a moment obliged to join in the general cheers. Poor piggy soon found a strap round its neck, and was dragged into the background:—Scott, watching the retreat, repeated with mock pathos the first verse of an old pastoral song—

"What will I do gin my hoggie* die?
My joy, my pride, my hoggie!
My only beast, I had nae mae,
And wow! but I was vogie!"

* *Hog* signifies in the Scotch dialect a young sheep that has never been shorn. Hence, no doubt, the name of the Poet of

—the cheers were redoubled—and the squadron moved on.

This pig had taken, nobody could tell how, a most sentimental attachment to Scott, and was constantly urging its pretensions to be admitted a regular member of his *tail* along with the greyhounds and terriers; but, indeed, I remember him suffering another summer under the same sort of pertinacity on the part of an affectionate hen. I leave the explanation for philosophers—but such were the facts. I have too much respect for the vulgarly calumniated donkey to name him in the same category of pets with the pig and the hen; but a year or two after this time, my wife used to drive a couple of these animals in a little garden chair, and whenever her father appeared at the door of our cottage, we were sure to see Hannah More and Lady Morgan (as Anne Scott had wickedly christened them) trotting from their pasture to lay their noses over the paling, and, as Washington Irving says of the old whitehaired hedger with the Parisian snuff-box, "to have a pleasant crack wi' the laird."

Ettrick—derived from a long line of shepherds. Mr Charles Lamb, however, in one of his sonnets, suggests this pretty origin of *his* "Family Name:"—

> "Perhaps some shepherd on Lincolnian plains,
> In manners guileless as his own sweet flocks,
> Received it first amid the merry mocks
> And arch allusions of his fellow swains."

But to return to our *chasse*. On reaching Newark Castle, we found Lady Scott, her eldest daughter, and the venerable Mackenzie, all busily engaged in unpacking a basket that had been placed in their carriage, and arranging the luncheon it contained upon the mossy rocks overhanging the bed of the Yarrow. When such of the company as chose had partaken of this refection, the Man of Feeling resumed his pony, and all ascended the mountain, duly marshalled at proper distances, so as to beat in a broad line over the heather, Sir Walter directing the movement from the right wing—towards Blackandro. Davy, next to whom I chanced to be riding, laid his whip about the fern like an experienced hand, but cracked many a joke, too, upon his own jack-boots, and surveying the long eager battalion of bush-rangers, exclaimed—"Good heavens! is it thus that I visit the scenery of the Lay of the Last Minstrel?" He then kept muttering to himself, as his glowing eye—(the finest and brightest that I ever saw)—ran over the landscape, some of those beautiful lines from the *Conclusion* of the Lay—

——— "But still,
When summer smiled on sweet Bowhill,
And July's eve, with balmy breath,
Waved the blue-bells on Newark heath,
When throstles sung in Hareheadshaw,
And corn was green on Carterhaugh,
And flourished, broad, Blackandro's oak,
The aged harper's soul awoke," &c.

Mackenzie, spectacled though he was, saw the first sitting hare, gave the word to slip the dogs, and spurred after them like a boy. All the seniors, indeed, did well as long as the course was upwards, but when puss took down the declivity, they halted and breathed themselves upon the knoll—cheering gaily, however, the young people, who dashed at full speed past and below them. Coursing on such a mountain is not like the same sport over a set of fine English pastures. There were gulfs to be avoided and bogs enough to be threaded—many a stiff nag stuck fast —many a bold rider measured his length among the peat-hags — and another stranger to the ground besides Davy plunged neck-deep into a treacherous well-head, which, till they were floundering in it, had borne all the appearance of a piece of delicate green turf. When Sir Humphry emerged from his involuntary bath, his habiliments garnished with mud, slime, and mangled water-cresses, Sir Walter received him with a triumphant *encore!* But the philosopher had his revenge, for joining soon afterwards in a brisk gallop, Scott put Sibyl Grey to a leap beyond her prowess, and lay humbled in the ditch, while Davy, who, was better mounted, cleared it and him at a bound. Happily there was little damage done—but no one was sorry that the sociable had been detained at the foot of the hill.

I have seen Sir Humphry in many places, and in company of many different descriptions; but never to

such advantage as at Abbotsford. His host and he delighted in each other, and the modesty of their mutual admiration was a memorable spectacle. Davy was by nature a poet—and Scott, though anything but a philosopher in the modern sense of that term, might, I think it very likely, have pursued the study of physical science with zeal and success, had he happened to fall in with such an instructor as Sir Humphry would have been to him, in his early life. Each strove to make the other talk—and they did so in turn more charmingly than I ever heard either on any other occasion whatsoever. Scott in his romantic narratives touched a deeper chord of feeling than usual, when he had such a listener as Davy; and Davy, when induced to open his views upon any question of scientific interest in Scott's presence, did so with a degree of clear energetic eloquence, and with a flow of imagery and illustration, of which neither his habitual tone of table-talk (least of all in London), nor any of his prose writings (except, indeed, the posthumous Consolations of Travel) could suggest an adequate notion. I say his prose writings —for who that has read his sublime quatrains on the doctrine of Spinoza can doubt that he might have united, if he had pleased, in some great didactic poem, the vigorous ratiocination of Dryden and the moral majesty of Wordsworth? I remember William Laidlaw whispering to me, one night, when their "rapt talk" had kept the circle round the fire until

long after the usual bedtime of Abbotsford — "Gude preserve us! this is a very superior occasion! Eh, sirs!" he added, cocking his eye like a bird, "I wonder if Shakspeare and Bacon ever met to screw ilk other up?"

Since I have touched on the subject of Sir Walter's autumnal diversions in these his later years, I may as well notice here two annual festivals, when sport was made his pretext for assembling his rural neighbours about him — days eagerly anticipated, and fondly remembered by many. One was a solemn bout of salmon-fishing for the neighbouring gentry and their families, instituted originally, I believe, by Lord Somerville, but now, in his absence, conducted and presided over by the Sheriff. Charles Purdie, already mentioned, had charge (partly as lessee) of the salmon-fisheries for three or four miles of the Tweed, including all the water attached to the lands of Abbotsford, Gala, and Allwyn; and this festival had been established with a view, besides other considerations, of recompensing him for the attention he always bestowed on any of the lairds or their visiters that chose to fish, either from the banks or the boat, within his jurisdiction. His selection of the day, and other precautions, generally secured an abundance of sport for the great anniversary; and then the whole party assembled to regale on the newly caught prey, boiled, grilled, and roasted in every variety of preparation, beneath a grand old ash, adjoining Charlie's

cottage at Boldside, on the northern margin of the Tweed, about a mile above Abbotsford. This banquet took place earlier in the day or later, according to circumstances; but it often lasted till the harvest moon shone on the lovely scene and its revellers. These formed groups that would have done no discredit to Watteau—and a still better hand has painted the background in the Introduction to the Monastery: —"On the opposite bank of the Tweed might be seen the remains of ancient enclosures, surrounded by sycamores and ash-trees of considerable size. These had once formed the crofts or arable ground of a village, now reduced to a single hut, the abode of a fisherman, who also manages a ferry. The cottages, even the church which once existed there, have sunk into vestiges hardly to be traced without visiting the spot, the inhabitants having gradually withdrawn to the more prosperous town of Galashiels, which has risen into consideration within two miles of their neighbourhood. Superstitious eld, however, has tenanted the deserted grove with aërial beings, to supply the want of the mortal tenants who have deserted it. The ruined and abandoned churchyard of Boldside has been long believed to be haunted by the Fairies, and the deep broad current of the Tweed, wheeling in moonlight round the foot of the steep bank, with the number of trees originally planted for shelter round the fields of the cottagers, but now presenting the effect of scattered and detached groves, fill up the

idea which one would form in imagination for a scene that Oberon and Queen Mab might love to revel in. There are evenings when the spectator might believe, with Father Chaucer, that the

> ——— 'Queen of Faëry,
> With harp, and pipe, and symphony,
> Were dwelling in the place.'" ———

Sometimes the evening closed with a "burning of the water;" and then the Sheriff, though now not so agile as when he practised that rough sport in the early times of Ashestiel, was sure to be one of the party in the boat,—held a torch, or perhaps took the helm,—and seemed to enjoy the whole thing as heartily as the youngest of his company—

> "Tis blithe along the midnight tide,
> With stalwart arm the boat to guide—
> On high the dazzling blaze to rear,
> And heedful plunge the barbed spear;
> Rock, wood, and scaur, emerging bright,
> Fling on the stream their ruddy light,
> And from the bank our band appears
> Like Genii armed with fiery spears."*

The other "superior occasion" came later in the season; the 28th of October, the birthday of Sir Walter's eldest son, was, I think, that usually selected for *the Abbotsford Hunt.* This was a coursing-field on a large scale, including, with as many of the young gentry as pleased to attend, all Scott's

* See Poetical Works, vol. xi. pp. 334–5.

personal favourites among the yeomen and farmers of the surrounding country. The Sheriff always took the field, but latterly devolved the command upon his good friend Mr John Usher, the ex-laird of Toftfield; and he could not have had a more skilful or a better-humoured lieutenant. The hunt took place either on the moors above the Cauld-Shiels Loch, or over some of the hills on the estate of Gala, and we had commonly, ere we returned, hares enough to supply the wife of every farmer that attended, with *soup* for a week following. The whole then dined at Abbotsford, the Sheriff in the chair, Adam Fergusson croupier, and Dominie Thomson, of course, chaplain. George, by the way, was himself an eager partaker in the preliminary sport; and now he would favour us with a grace, in Burns's phrase, "as long as my arm," beginning with thanks to the Almighty, who had given man dominion over the fowls of the air, and the beasts of the field, and expatiating on this text with so luculent a commentary, that Scott, who had been fumbling with his spoon long before he reached his Amen, could not help exclaiming as he sat down, "Well done, Mr George, I think we've had everything but the view holla!" The company, whose onset had been thus deferred, were seldom, I think, under thirty in number, and sometimes they exceeded forty. The feast was such as suited the occasion—a baron of beef, roasted, at the foot of the table, a salted round at the head, while tureens of

hare-soup, hotchpotch, and cockeyleekie, extended down the centre, and such light articles as geese, turkeys, entire sucking-pigs, a singed sheep's head, and the unfailing haggis, were set forth by way of side-dishes. Blackcock and moorfowl, bushels of snipe, *black puddings*, *white puddings*, and pyramids of pancakes, formed the second course. Ale was the favourite beverage during dinner, but there was plenty of port and sherry for those whose stomachs they suited. The quaighs of Glenlivet were filled brimful, and tossed off as if they held water. The wine decanters made a few rounds of the table, but the hints for hot punch and toddy soon became clamorous. Two or three bowls were introduced, and placed under the supervision of experienced manufacturers—one of these being usually the Ettrick Shepherd,—and then the business of the evening commenced in good earnest. The faces shone and glowed like those at Camacho's wedding: the chairman told his richest stories of old rural life, Lowland or Highland; Fergusson and humbler heroes fought their peninsular battles o'er again; the stalwart Dandie Dinmonts lugged out their last winter's snow-storm, the parish scandal, perhaps, or the dexterous bargain of the Northumberland *tryste;* and every man was knocked down for the song that he sung best, or took most pleasure in singing. Sheriff-substitute Shortreed—(a cheerful hearty little man, with a sparkling eye and a most infec-

tious laugh)—gave us *Dick o' the Cow*, or *Now Liddesdale has ridden a raid;* his son Thomas (Sir Walter's assiduous disciple and assistant in Border Heraldry and Genealogy) shone without a rival in *The Douglas Tragedy* and *The Twa Corbies;* a weatherbeaten, stiff-bearded veteran, *Captain* Ormistoun, as he was called (though I doubt if his rank was recognised at the Horse-Guards), had the primitive pastoral of *Cowdenknowes* in sweet perfection; Hogg produced *The Women folk*, or *The Kye comes hame;* and, in spite of many grinding notes, contrived to make everybody delighted, whether with the fun or the pathos of his ballad; the Melrose doctor sang in spirited style some of Moore's masterpieces; a couple of retired sailors joined in *Bould Admiral Duncan upon the high sea;*—and the gallant croupier crowned the last bowl with *Ale, good ale, thou art my darling!* Imagine some smart Parisian *savant*—some dreamy pedant of Halle or Heidelberg—a brace of stray young Lords from Oxford or Cambridge, or perhaps their prim college tuters, planted here and there amidst these rustic wassailers—this being their first vision of the author of Marmion and Ivanhoe, and he appearing as heartily at home in the scene as if he had been a veritable *Dandie* himself—his face radiant, his laugh gay as childhood, his chorus always ready. And so it proceeded until some worthy, who had fifteen or twenty miles to ride home, began to insinuate that

his wife and bairns would be getting sorely anxious about the fords, and the Dumples and Hoddins were at last heard neighing at the gate, and it was voted that the hour had come for *doch an dorrach*—the stirrup-cup—to wit, a bumper all round of the unmitigated *mountain dew*. How they all contrived to get home in safety Heaven only knows—but I never heard of any serious accident except upon one occasion, when James Hogg made a bet at starting that he would leap over his wall-eyed pony as she stood, and broke his nose in this experiment of "o'ervaulting ambition." One comely goodwife, far off among the hills, amused Sir Walter by telling him, the next time he passed her homestead after one of these jolly doings, what her husband's first words were when he alighted at his own door—"Ailie, my woman, I'm ready for my bed—and oh lass (he gallantly added), I wish I could sleep for a towmont, for there's only ae thing in this warld worth living for, and that's the Abbotsford hunt!"

It may well be supposed that the President of the Boldside Festival and the Abbotsford Hunt did not omit the good old custom of *the Kirn*. Every November, before quitting the country for Edinburgh, he gave a *harvest-home*, on the most approved model of former days, to all the peasantry on his estate, their friends and kindred, and as many poor neighbours besides as his barn could hold. Here old and young danced from sunset to sunrise, John

of Skye's bagpipe being relieved at intervals by the violin of some "Wandering Willie;"—and the laird and all his family were present during the early part of the evening—he and his wife to distribute the contents of the first tub of whisky-punch, and his young people to take their due share in the endless reels and hornpipes of the earthen floor. As Mr Morritt has said of him as he appeared at Laird Nippey's kirn of earlier days, "to witness the cordiality of his reception might have unbent a misanthrope." He had his private joke for every old wife or "gausie carle," his arch compliment for the ear of every bonny lass, and his hand and his blessing for the head of every little *Eppie Daidle* from Abbotstown or Broomylees.

"The notable paradox," he says in one of the most charming of his essays, "that the residence of a proprietor upon his estate is of as little consequence as the bodily presence of a stockholder upon Exchange, has, we believe, been renounced. At least, as in the case of the Duchess of Suffolk's relationship to her own child, the vulgar continue to be of opinion that there is some difference in favour of the next hamlet and village, and even of the vicinage in general, when the squire spends his rents at the manor-house, instead of cutting a figure in France or Italy. A celebrated politician used to say he would willingly bring in one bill to make poaching felony, another to encourage the breed of foxes, and

a third to revive the decayed amusements of cock-fighting and bull-baiting—that he would make, in short, any sacrifice to the humours and prejudices of the country gentlemen, in their most extravagant form, provided only he could prevail upon them to 'dwell in their own houses, be the patrons of their own tenantry, and the fathers of their own children.'"*

* Essay on Landscape Gardening, Miscellaneous Prose Works, vol. xxi. p. 77.

CHAPTER L.

Publication of the Abbot—The Blair-Adam Club —Kelso, Waltonhall, &c.—Ballantyne's Novelist's Library—Acquittal of Queen Caroline—Service of the Duke of Buccleuch—Scott elected President of the Royal Society of Edinburgh—The Celtic Society—Letters to Lord Montagu, Cornet Scott, Charles Scott, Allan Cunningham, &c.—Kenilworth published.

1820-1821.

In the September of 1820, Longman, in conjunction with Constable, published *The Abbot*—the continuation, to a certain extent, of The Monastery, of which I barely mentioned the appearance under the preceding March. I had nothing of any consequence to add to the information which the subsequent Introduction affords us respecting the composition and fate of the former of these novels. It was considered as a failure—the first of the series on which any

such sentence was pronounced; — nor have I much to allege in favour of the White Lady of Avenel, generally criticised as the primary blot, or of Sir Percy Shafton, who was loudly, though not quite so generally, condemned. In either case, considered separately, he seems to have erred from dwelling (in the German taste) on materials that might have done very well for a rapid sketch. The phantom with whom we have leisure to become familiar, is sure to fail — even the witch of Endor is contented with a momentary appearance and five syllables of the shade she evokes. And we may say the same of any grotesque absurdity in human manners. Scott might have considered with advantage how lightly and briefly Shakspeare introduces *his* Euphuism — though actually the prevalent humour of the hour when he was writing. But perhaps these errors might have attracted little notice had the novelist been successful in finding some reconciling medium capable of giving consistence and harmony to his naturally incongruous materials. " These," said one of his ablest critics, " are joined — but they refuse to blend: Nothing can be more poetical in conception, and sometimes in language, than the fiction of the White Maid of Avenel; but when this ethereal personage, who rides on the cloud which ' for Araby is bound' — who is

> ' Something between heaven and hell,
> Something that neither stood nor fell,' —

—whose existence is linked by an awful and mysterious destiny to the fortunes of a decaying family; when such a being as this descends to clownish pranks, and promotes a frivolous jest about a tailor's bodkin, the course of our sympathies is rudely arrested, and we feel as if the author had put upon us the old fashioned pleasantry of selling a bargain."*

The beautiful natural scenery, and the sterling Scotch characters and manners introduced in the Monastery, are, however, sufficient to redeem even these mistakes; and, indeed, I am inclined to believe that it will ultimately occupy a securer place than some romances enjoying hitherto a far higher reputation, in which he makes no use of *Scottish* materials.

Sir Walter himself thought well of *The Abbot* when he had finished it. When he sent me a complete copy, I found on a slip of paper at the beginning of volume first, these two lines from *Tom Crib's Memorial to Congress*—

> "Up he rose in a funk, lapped a toothful of brandy,
> And *to it* again!—any odds upon Sandy!"—

and whatever ground he had been supposed to lose in the Monastery, part at least of it was regained by this tale, and especially by its most graceful and pathetic portraiture of Mary Stuart. "The Castle of Lochleven," says the Chief-Commissioner Adam, "is seen at every turn from the northern side of Blair-Adam. This castle, renowned and attractive

* Adelphus's Letters to Heber, p. 13.

above all the others in my neighbourhood, became an object of much increased attention, and a theme of constant conversation, after the author of Waverley had, by his inimitable power of delineating character —by his creative poetic fancy in representing scenes of varied interest—and by the splendour of his romantic descriptions, infused a more diversified and a deeper tone of feeling into the history of Queen Mary's captivity and escape."

I have introduced this quotation from a little book privately printed for the amiable Judge's own family and familiar friends, because Sir Walter owned to myself at the time, that the idea of *The Abbot* had arisen in his mind during a visit to Blair-Adam. In the pages of the tale itself, indeed, the beautiful localities of that estate are distinctly mentioned, with an allusion to the virtues and manners that adorn its mansion, such as must have been intended to satisfy the possessor (if he could have had any doubts on the subject) as to the authorship of those novels.

The Right Honourable William Adam—(who must pardon my mentioning him here as the only man I ever knew that rivalled Sir Walter Scott in uniform graciousness of *bonhommie* and gentleness of humour)*—was appointed, in 1815, to the Presidency of the Court for Jury Trial in Civil Cases, then instituted in Scotland, and he thenceforth spent a great part of his time at his paternal seat in Kin-

* See *ante*, Vol. V. p. 46.

ross-shire. Here, about Midsummer 1816, he received a visit from his near relation William Clerk, Adam Fergusson, his hereditary friend and especial favourite, and their lifelong intimate, Scott. They remained with him for two or three days, in the course of which they were all so much delighted with their host, and he with them, that it was resolved to reassemble the party, with a few additions, at the same season of every following year. This was the origin of the Blair-Adam Club, the regular members of which were in number nine; viz. the four already named—the Chief Commissioner's son, Admiral Sir Charles Adam—his son-in-law, the late Mr Anstruther Thomson of Charleton, in Fifeshire —Mr Thomas Thomson, the Deputy-Register of Scotland—his brother, the Rev. John Thomson, minister of Duddingston, who, though a most diligent and affectionate parish-priest, has found leisure to make himself one of the first masters of the British School of Landscape Painting—and the Right Hon. Sir Samuel Shepherd, who, after filling with high distinction the office of Attorney-General in England, became Chief Baron of the Court of Exchequer in Scotland, shortly after the third anniversary of this brotherhood, into which he was immediately welcomed with unanimous cordiality. They usually contrived to meet on a Friday; spent the Saturday in a ride to some scene of historical interest within an easy distance; enjoyed a quiet

Sunday at home—"duly attending divine worship at the Kirk of Cleish (not Cleishbotham)"—gave Monday morning to another Antiquarian excursion, and returned to Edinburgh in time for the Courts of Tuesday. From 1816 to 1831 inclusive, Sir Walter was a constant attendant at these meetings. He visited in this way Castle Campbell, Magus Moor, Falkland, Dunfermline, St Andrews, and many other scenes of ancient celebrity; to one of those trips we must ascribe his dramatic sketch of *Macduff's Cross*—and to that of the dog-days of 1819, we owe the weightier obligation of *The Abbot*.

I expect an easy forgiveness for introducing from the *liber rarissimus* of Blair-Adam the page that belongs to that particular meeting—which, though less numerous than usual, is recorded as having been "most pleasing and delightful." "There were," writes the President, "only five of us; the Chief Baron, Sir Walter, Mr Clerk, Charles Adam, and myself. The weather was sultry, almost beyond bearing. We did not stir beyond the bounds of the pleasure-ground, indeed not far from the vicinity of the house; wandering from one shady place to another; lolling upon the grass, or sitting upon prostrate trees not yet carried away by the purchaser. Our conversation was constant, though tranquil; and what might be expected from Mr Clerk, who is a superior converser, and whose mind is stored with knowledge; and from Sir Walter Scott, who has let

the public know what his powers are. Our talk was of all sorts (except of *beeves*.) Besides a display of their historic knowledge, at once extensive and correct, they touched frequently on the pleasing reminiscences of their early days. Shepherd and I could not go back to those periods; but we could trace our own intimacy and constant friendship for more than forty years back, when in 1783 we began our professional pursuits on the Circuit. So that if Scott could describe, with inconceivable humour, their doings at Mr Murray's of Simprim, when emerging from boyhood; when he, and Murray, and Clerk, and Adam Fergusson, acted plays in the schoolroom (Simprim making the dominie bear his part) — when Fergusson was prompter, orchestra, and audience — and as Scott said, representing the whole pit, kicked up an 'O. P.' row by anticipation; and many other such recollections — Shepherd and I could tell of our Circuit fooleries, as old Fielding (the son of the great novelist) called them — of the Circuit songs which Will Fielding made and sung, — and of the grave Sir William Grant (then a briefless barrister), ycleped by Fielding the Chevalier Grant, bearing his part in those fooleries, enjoying all our pranks with great zest, and who talked of them with delight to his dying day. When the conversation took a graver tone, and turned upon literary subjects, the Chief-Baron took a great share it; for notwithstanding his infirmity of deafness, he is a most pleasing and agree-

able converser, and readily picks up what is passing; and having a classical mind and classical information, gives a pleasing, gentlemanly, and well-informed tone to general conversation.—Before I bring these recollections of our social and cheerful doings to a close, let me observe, that there was a characteristic feature attending them, which it would be injustice to the individuals who composed our parties not to mention. The whole set of us were addicted to take a full share of conversation, and to discuss every subject that occurred with sufficient keenness. The topics were multifarious, and the opinions of course various; but during the whole time of our intercourse, for so many years, four days at a time, and always together, except when we were asleep, there never was the least tendency on any occasion to any unruly debate, nor to anything that deviated from the pure delight of social intercourse."

The Chief-Commissioner adds the following particulars in his appendix:—"Our return from Blair-Adam (after the first meeting of the Club) was very early on a Tuesday morning, that we might reach the Courts by nine o'clock. An occurrence took place near the Hawes' Inn, which left little doubt upon my mind that Sir Walter Scott was the author of Waverley, of Guy Mannering, and of the Antiquary, his only novels then published. The morning was prodigiously fine, and the sea as smooth as glass. Sir Walter and I were standing on the beach, en-

joying the prospect; the other gentlemen were not come from the boat. The porpoises were rising in great numbers, when Sir Walter said to me, 'Look at them, how they are showing themselves; what fine fellows they are! I have the greatest respect for them: I would as soon kill a man as a phoca.' I could not conceive that the same idea could occur to two men respecting this animal, and set down that it could only be Sir Walter Scott who made the phoca have the better of the battle with the Antiquary's nephew, Captain M'Intyre.*

"Soon after, another occurrence quite confirmed me as to the authorship of the novels. On that visit to Blair-Adam, in course of conversation, I mentioned an anecdote about Wilkie, the author of the Epigoniad, who was but a formal poet, but whose conversation was most amusing, and full of fancy. Having heard much of him in my family, where he had been very intimate, I went, when quite a lad, to St Andrews, where he was a Professor, for the purpose of visiting him. I had scarcely let him know who I was, when he said, 'Mr William, were you ever in this place before?' I said no. 'Then, sir, you must go and look at Regulus' Tower, — no doubt you will have something of an eye of an architect about you; — walk up to it at an angle, advance and recede until you get to see it at its

* The good Chief-Commissioner makes a little mistake here — a *Phoca* being, not a porpoise but, a *Seal*.

proper distance, and come back and tell me whether you ever saw anything so beautiful in building: till I saw that tower and studied it, I thought the beauty of architecture had consisted in curly-wurlies, but now I find it consists in symmetry and proportion.' In the following winter Rob Roy was published, and there I read, that the Cathedral of Glasgow was 'a respectable Gothic structure, without any *curly-wurlies*.'

"But what confirmed, and was certainly meant to disclose to me the author (and that in a very elegant manner), was the mention of the *Kiery Craigs* — a picturesque piece of scenery in the grounds of Blair-Adam — as being in the vicinity of Kelty Bridge, the *howf* of Auchtermuchty, the Kinross carrier.

"It was only an intimate friend of the family, in the habit of coming to Blair-Adam, who could know anything of the Kiery Craigs or its name; and both the scenery and the name had attractions for Sir Walter.

"At our first meeting after the publication of the 'Abbot,' when the party was assembled on the top of the rock, the Chief-Baron Shepherd, looking Sir Walter full in the face, and stamping his staff on the ground, said, — 'Now, Sir Walter, I think we be upon the top of the Kiery *Craggs*.' Sir Walter preserved profound silence; but there was a conscious looking down, and a considerable elongation of his upper lip."

Since I have obtained permission to quote from this private volume, I may as well mention that I was partly moved to ask that favour, by the author's own confession, that his "Blair-Adam, from 1733 to 1834," originated in a suggestion of Scott's. "It was," says the Judge, "on a fine Sunday, lying on the grassy summit of Bennarty, above its craggy brow, that Sir Walter said, looking first at the flat expanse of Kinross-shire (on the south side of the Ochils), and then at the space which Blair-Adam fills between the hill of Drumglow (the highest of the Cleish hills), and the valley of Lochore—'What an extraordinary thing it is, that here to the north so little appears to have been done, when there are so many proprietors to work upon it; and to the south, here is a district of country entirely made by the efforts of one family, in three generations, and one of them amongst us in the full enjoyment of what has been done by his two predecessors and himself? Blair-Adam, as I have always heard, had a wild, uncomely, and unhospitable appearance, before its improvements were begun. It would be most curious to record in writing its original state, and trace its gradual progress to its present condition.'" Upon this suggestion, enforced by the approbation of the other members present, the President of the Blair-Adam Club commenced arranging the materials for what constitutes a most instructive as well as entertaining history of the Agricultural

and Arboricultural progress of his domains, in the course of a hundred years, under his grandfather, his father (the celebrated architect), and himself. And Sir Walter had only suggested to his friend of Kinross-shire what he was resolved to put into practice with regard to his own improvements on Tweedside; for he begun at precisely the same period to keep a regular Journal of all his rural transactions, under the title of "SYLVA ABBOTSFORDIENSIS."

For reasons, as we have seen, connected with the affairs of the Ballantynes, Messrs Longman published the first edition of The Monastery; and similar circumstances induced Sir Walter to associate this house with that of Constable in the succeeding novel. Constable disliked its title, and would fain have had *The Nunnery* instead: but Scott stuck to his *Abbot*. The bookseller grumbled a little, but was soothed by the author's reception of his request that Queen Elizabeth might be brought into the field in his next romance, as a companion to the Mary Stuart of the Abbot. Scott would not indeed indulge him with the choice of the particular period of Elizabeth's reign, indicated in the proposed title of *The Armada;* but expressed his willingness to take up his own old favourite, the legend of Meikle's ballad. He wished to call the novel, like the ballad, *Cumnor-Hall*, but in further deference to Constable's wishes, substituted "Kenilworth." John Ballantyne objected to this title, and told Constable the result

would be "something worthy of the kennel;" but Constable had all reason to be satisfied with the child of his christening. His partner, Mr Cadell, says—"His vanity boiled over so much at this time, on having his suggestion gone into, that when in his high moods, he used to stalk up and down his room, and exclaim, 'By G—, I am all but the author of the Waverley Novels!'" Constable's bibliographical knowledge, however, it is but fair to say, was really of most essential service to Scott upon many of these occasions; and his letter (now before me) proposing the subject of *The Armada*, furnished the Novelist with such a catalogue of materials for the illustration of the period as may, probably enough, have called forth some very energetic expression of thankfulness.

Scott's kindness secured for John Ballantyne the usual interest in the profits of Kenilworth, the last of his great works in which this friend was to have any concern. I have already mentioned the obvious drooping of his health and strength; and a document to be introduced presently, will show that John himself had occasional glimpses, at least, of his danger, before the close of 1819. Nevertheless, his spirits continued, at the time of which I am now treating, to be in general as high as ever; nay, it was now, after his maladies had taken a very serious shape, and it was hardly possible to look on him without anticipating a speedy termination of his career, that

the gay hopeful spirit of the shattered and trembling invalid led him to plunge into a new stream of costly indulgence. It was an amiable point in his character that he had always retained a tender fondness for his native place. He had now taken up the ambition of rivalling his illustrious friend, in some sort, by providing himself with a summer retirement amidst the scenery of his boyhood; and it need not be doubted, at the same time, that in erecting a villa at Kelso, he anticipated and calculated on substantial advantages from its vicinity to Abbotsford.

One fine day of this autumn, I accompanied Sir Walter to inspect the progress of this edifice, which was to have the title of *Walton Hall.* John had purchased two or three old houses of two stories in height, with knotched gables, and thatched roofs, near the end of the long, original street of Kelso, and not far from the gateway of the Duke of Roxburghe's magnificent park, with their small gardens and paddocks running down to the margin of the Tweed. He had already fitted up convenient bachelor's lodgings in one of the primitive tenements, and converted the others into a goodly range of stabling, and was now watching the completion of his new *corps de logis* behind, which included a handsome entrance-hall, or saloon, destined to have old Piscator's bust, on a stand, in the centre, and to be embellished all round with emblems of his sport. Behind this were spacious rooms overlooking the little *pleasance,* which

was to be laid out somewhat in the Italian style, with ornamental steps, a fountain, and *jet d'eau*, and a broad terrace hanging over the river, and commanding an extensive view of perhaps the most beautiful landscape in Scotland. In these new dominions John received us with pride and hilarity; and we then walked with him over this pretty town, lounged away an hour among the ruins of the Abbey, and closed our perambulation with *the Garden*, where Scott had spent some of the happiest of his early summers, and where he pointed out with sorrowful eyes the site of the Platanus under which he first read Percy's Reliques. Returning to John's villa, we dined gaily, *al fresco*, by the side of his fountain; and after not a few bumpers to the prosperity of Walton Hall, he mounted Old Mortality, and escorted us for several miles on our ride homewards. It was this day that, overflowing with kindly zeal, Scott revived one of the long-forgotten projects of their early connexion in business, and offered his services as editor of a Novelist's Library, to be printed and published for the sole benefit of his host. The offer was eagerly embraced, and when two or three mornings afterwards John returned Sir Walter's visit, he had put into his hands the MS. of that admirable life of Fielding, which was followed at brief intervals, as the arrangements of the projected work required, by others of Smollett, Richardson, Defoe, Sterne, Johnson, Goldsmith, Le Sage, Horace Walpole,

Cumberland, Mrs Radcliffe, Charles Johnstone, Clara Reeve, Charlotte Smith, and Robert Bage. The publication of the first volume of "Ballantyne's Novelist's Library" did not take place, however, until February 1821; and the series was closed soon after the proprietor's death in the ensuing summer. In spite of the charming prefaces, in which Scott combines all the graces of his easy narrative with a perpetual stream of deep and gentle wisdom in commenting on the tempers and fortunes of his best predecessors in novel literature, and also with expositions of his own critical views, which prove how profoundly he had investigated the principles and practice of those masters before he struck out a new path for himself —in spite of these delightful and valuable essays, the publication was not prosperous. Constable, after Ballantyne's death, would willingly have resumed the scheme. But Scott had by that time convinced himself that it was in vain to expect much success for a collection so bulky and miscellaneous, and which must of necessity include a large proportion of matter, condemned by the purity, whether real or affected, of modern taste. He could hardly have failed to perceive, on reflection, that his own novels, already constituting an extensive library of fiction, in which no purist could pretend to discover danger for the morals of youth, had in fact superseded the works of less strait-laced days in the only permanently and solidly profitable market for books of this order. He

at all events declined Constable's proposition for renewing and extending this attempt. What he did, was done gratuitously for John Ballantyne's sake; and I have dwelt on it thus long, because, as the reader will perceive by and by, it was so done during (with one exception) the very busiest period of Scott's literary life.

Shortly before Scott wrote the following letters, he had placed his second son (at this time in his fifteenth year) under the care of the Reverend John Williams, who had been my intimate friend and companion at Oxford, with a view of preparing him for that University. Mr Williams was then Vicar of Lampeter, in Cardiganshire, and the high satisfaction with which his care of Charles Scott inspired Sir Walter, induced several other Scotch gentlemen of distinction by and by to send their sons also to his Welsh parsonage; the result of which northern connexions was important to the fortunes of one of the most accurate and extensive scholars and most skilful teachers of the present time.

"*To Walter Scott, Esq., 18th Hussars, Cork.*

"Edinburgh, 14th November 1820.

"My Dear Walter,

"I send you a cheque on Coutts for your quarter's allowance. I hope you manage your cash like a person of discretion — above all, avoid the

card-tables of ancient dowagers. Always remember that my fortune, however much my efforts may increase it, and although I am improving it for your benefit, not for any that can accrue in my own time, —yet never can be more than a decent independence, and therefore will make a poor figure unless managed with good sense, moderation, and prudence—which are habits easily acquired in youth, while habitual extravagance is a fault very difficult to be afterwards corrected.

"We came to town yesterday, and bade adieu to Abbotsford for the season. Fife,* to mamma's great surprise and scandal, chose to stay at Abbotsford with Mai, and plainly denied to follow the carriage—so our canine establishment in Castle Street is reduced to little Ury.† We spent two days at Arniston, on the road, and on coming here, found Sophia as nicely and orderly settled in her house as if she had been a married woman these five years. I believe she is very happy—perhaps unusually so, for her wishes are moderate, and all seem anxious to please her. She is preparing in due time for the arrival of a little stranger, who will make you an uncle, and me (God help me!) a grandpapa.

"The Round Towers you mention are very curious, and seem to have been built, as the Irish hackney-coachman said of the Martello one at the

* *Finette*—a spaniel of Lady Scott's.

† *Urisk*—a small terrier of the long silky-haired Kintail breed.

Black Rock, 'to puzzle posterity.' There are two of them in Scotland—both excellent pieces of architecture; one at Brechin, built quite close to the old church, so as to appear united with it, but in fact it is quite detached from the church, and sways from it in a high wind, when it vibrates like a lighthouse. The other is at Abernethy in Perthshire—said to have been the capital city of the Picts. I am glad to see you observe objects of interest and curiosity, because otherwise a man may travel over the universe without acquiring any more knowledge than his horse does.

"We had our hunt, and our jollification after it, on last Wednesday. It went off in great style, although I felt a little sorry at having neither Charles nor you in the field. By the way, Charles seems most admirably settled. I had a most sensible letter on the subject from Mr Williams, who appears to have taken great pains, and to have formed a very just conception both of his merits and foibles. When I have an opportunity, I will hand you his letter; for it will entertain you, it is so correct a picture of Monsieur Charles.

"Dominie Thomson has gone to a Mrs Dennistoun, of Colgrain, to drill her youngsters. I am afraid he will find a change; but I hope to have a nook open to him by and by—as a sort of retreat or harbour on his lee. Adieu, my dear—always believe me your affectionate father, WALTER SCOTT."

"*To Mr Charles Scott;*

(Care of the Rev. John Williams, Lampeter.)

"Edinburgh, 14th Nov. 1820.

"My Dear Boy Charles,

"Your letters made us all very happy, and I trust you are now comfortably settled and plying your task hard. Mr Williams will probably ground you more perfectly in the grammar of the classical languages than has hitherto been done, and this you will at first find but dry work. But there are many indispensable reasons why you must bestow the utmost attention upon it. A perfect knowledge of the classical languages has been fixed upon, and not without good reason, as the mark of a well-educated young man; and though people may have scrambled into distinction without it, it is always with the greatest difficulty, just like climbing over a wall, instead of giving your ticket at the door. Perhaps you may think another proof of a youth's talents might have been adopted; but what good will arise from your thinking so, if the general practice of society has fixed on this particular branch of knowledge as the criterion? Wheat or barley were as good grain, I suppose, as *sesamum;* but it was only to *sesamum* that the talisman gave way, and the rock opened; and it is equally certain that, if you are not a well-founded grammatical scholar in Greek and

Latin, you will in vain present other qualifications to distinction. Besides, the study of grammar, from its very asperities, is calculated to teach youth that patient labour which is necessary to the useful exertion of the understanding upon every other branch of knowledge; and your great deficiency is want of steadiness and of resolute application to the dry as well as the interesting parts of your learning. But exerting yourself, as I have no doubt you will do, under the direction of so learned a man and so excellent a teacher as Mr Williams, and being without the temptations to idleness which occurred at home, I have every reason to believe that to your natural quickness you will presently add such a *habit* of application and steadiness, as will make you a respected member of society, perhaps a distinguished one. It is very probable that the whole success of your future life may depend on the manner in which you employ *the next two years;* and I am therefore most anxious you should fully avail yourself of the opportunities now afforded you.

"You must not be too much disconcerted with the apparent dryness of your immediate studies. Language is the great mark by which man is distinguished from the beasts, and a strict acquaintance with the manner in which it is composed, becomes, as you follow it a little way, one of the most curious and interesting exercises of the intellect.

"We had our grand hunt on Wednesday last, a

fine day, and plenty of sport. We hunted all over Huntly wood, and so on to Halidon and Prieston—saw twelve hares, and killed six, having very hard runs, and tiring three packs of grews completely. In absence of Walter and you, Stenhouse the horse-couper led the field, and rode as if he had been a piece of his horse, sweltering like a wild-drake all through Marriage-Moss, at a motion betwixt swimming and riding. One unlucky accident befell;—Queen Mab, who was bestrode by Captain Adam, lifted up her heels against Mr Craig of Galashiels,* whose leg she greeted with a thump like a pistol-shot, while by the same movement she very nearly sent the noble Captain over her ears. Mr Craig was helped from horse, but would not permit his boot to be drawn off, protesting he would faint if he saw the bone of his leg sticking through the stocking. Some thought he was reluctant to exhibit his legs in their primitive and unclothed simplicity, in respect they have an unhappy resemblance to a pair of tongs. As for the Captain, he declared that if the accident had happened *in action*, the surgeon and drum-boys would have had off, not his *boot* only, but his *leg to boot*, before he could have uttered a remonstrance. At length Gala and I prevailed to have the boot drawn, and to my great joy I found

* Mr. George Craig, factor to the laird of Gala, and manager of a little branch bank at Galashiels. This worthy man was one of the regular members of the Abbotsford Hunt.

the damage was not serious, though the pain must have been severe.

"On Saturday we left Abbotsford, and dined and spent Sunday at Arniston, where we had many enquiries after you from Robert Dundas, who was so kind to you last year.

"I must conclude for the present, requesting your earnest pursuit of such branches of study as Mr Williams recommends. In a short time, as you begin to comprehend the subjects you are learning, you will find the path turn smoother, and that which at present seems wrapped up in an inextricable labyrinth of thorns and briers, will at once become easy and attractive.—Always, dear Charlie, your affectionate father, W. S."

On the same day Scott wrote as follows to the manly and amiable author of "Sir Marmaduke Maxwell," who had shortly before sent the MS. of that romantic drama to Abbotsford for his inspection:—

"*To Mr Allan Cunningham;*

(Care of F. Chantrey, Esq., R. A., London.)

Edinburgh, 14th November 1820.

"My Dear Allan,

"I have been meditating a long letter to you for many weeks past; but company, and rural business, and rural sports, are very unfavourable to

writing letters. I have now a double reason for writing, for I have to thank you for sending me in safety a beautiful specimen of our English Michael's talents in the cast of my venerable friend Mr Watt: it is a most striking resemblance, with all that living character which we are apt to think life itself alone can exhibit. I hope Mr Chantrey does not permit his distinguished skill either to remain unexercised, or to be lavished exclusively on subjects of little interest. I would like to see him engaged on some subject of importance completely adapted to the purpose of his chisel, and demanding its highest powers. Pray remember me to him most kindly.

"I have perused twice your curious and interesting manuscript. Many parts of the poetry are eminently beautiful, though I fear the great length of the piece, and some obscurity of the plot, would render it unfit for dramatic representation. There is also a fine tone of supernatural impulse spread over the whole action, which I think a common audience would not be likely to adopt or comprehend —though I own that to me it has a very powerful effect. Speaking of dramatic composition in general, I think it is almost essential (though the rule be most difficult in practice) that the plot, or business of the piece, should advance with every line that is spoken. The fact is, the drama is addressed chiefly to the eyes, and as much as can be, by any possibility, represented on the stage, should neither be

told nor described. Of the miscellaneous part of a large audience, many do not understand, nay, many cannot hear, either narrative or description, but are solely intent upon the action exhibited. It is, I conceive, for this reason that very bad plays, written by performers themselves, often contrive to get through, and not without applause; while others, immeasurably superior in point of poetical merit, fail, merely because the author is not sufficiently possessed of the trick of the scene, or enough aware of the importance of a maxim pronounced by no less a performer than Punch himself—(at least he was the last authority from whom I heard it),—*Push on, keep moving!* * Now, in your very ingenious dramatic effort, the interest not only stands still, but sometimes retrogrades. It contains, notwithstanding, many passages of eminent beauty, many specimens of most interesting dialogue; and, on the whole, if it is not fitted for the modern stage, I am not sure that its very imperfections do not render it more fit for the closet, for we certainly do not always read with the greatest pleasure those plays which act best.

"If, however, you should at any time wish to become a candidate for dramatic laurels, I would advise you, in the first place, to consult some professional person of judgment and taste. I should regard friend Terry as an excellent Mentor, and I believe

* *Punch* had been borrowing from *Young Rapid*, in the "Cure for the Heart-ache."

he would concur with me in recommending that at least one-third of the drama be retrenched, that the plot should be rendered simpler, and the motives more obvious; and I think the powerful language and many of the situations might then have their full effect upon the audience. I am uncertain if I have made myself sufficiently understood; but I would say, for example, that it is ill explained by what means Comyn and his gang, who land as shipwrecked men, become at once possessed of the old lord's domains, merely by killing and taking possession. I am aware of what you mean — namely, that being attached to the then rulers, he is supported in his ill-acquired power by their authority. But this is imperfectly brought out, and escaped me at the first reading. The superstitious motives, also, which induced the shepherds to delay their veangeance, are not likely to be intelligible to the generality of the hearers. It would seem more probable that the young Baron should have led his faithful vassals to avenge the death of his parents; and it has escaped me what prevents him from taking this direct and natural course. Besides it is, I believe, a rule (and it seems a good one) that one single interest, to which every other is subordinate, should occupy the whole play, — each separate object having just the effect of a mill-dam, sluicing off a certain portion of the sympathy, which should move on with increasing force and rapidity to the catastrophe. Now, in your

work, there are several divided points of interest — there is the murder of the old Baron — the escape of his wife — that of his son — the loss of his bride — the villanous artifices of Comyn to possess himself of her person — and, finally, the fall of Comyn, and acceleration of the vengeance due to his crimes. I am sure your own excellent sense, which I admire as much as I do your genius, will give me credit for my frankness in these matters; I only know, that I do not know many persons on whose performances I would venture to offer so much criticism.

"I will return the manuscript under Mr Freeling's Post-Office cover, and I hope it will reach you safe. — Adieu, my leal and esteemed friend — yours truly, WALTER SCOTT."

Shortly afterwards, Mr Cunningham, thanking his critic, said he had not yet received back his MS.; but that he hoped the delay had been occasioned by Sir Walter's communication of it to some friend of theatrical experience. He also mentioned his having undertaken a collection of "The Songs of Scotland," with notes. The answer was in these terms:—

"*To Mr Allan Cunningham.*

"My Dear Allan,

"It was as you supposed — I detained your manuscript to read it over with Terry. The plot

appears to Terry as to me, ill-combined, which is a great defect in a drama, though less perceptible in the closet than on the stage. Still if the mind can be kept upon one unbroken course of interest, the effect even in perusal is more gratifying. I have always considered this as the great secret in dramatic poetry, and conceive it one of the most difficult exercises of the invention possible to conduct a story through five acts, developing it gradually in every scene, so as to keep up the attention, yet never till the very conclusion permitting the nature of the catastrophe to become visible, — and all the while to accompany this by the necessary delineation of character and beauty of language. I am glad, however, that you mean to preserve in some permanent form your very curious drama, which, if not altogether fitted for the stage, cannot be read without very much and very deep interest.

"I am glad you are about Scottish song. No man — not Robert Burns himself — has contributed more beautiful effusions to enrich it. Here and there I would pluck a flower from your Posy to give what remains an effect of greater simplicity; but luxuriance can only be the fault of genius, and many of your songs are, I think, unmatched. I would instance — "It's hame and it's hame," which my daughter Mrs Lockhart sings with such uncommon effect. You cannot do anything either in the way of original composition, or collection, or criti-

cism, that will not be highly acceptable to all who are worth pleasing in the Scottish public — and I pray you to proceed with it.

" Remember me kindly to Chantrey. I am happy my effigy is to go with that of Wordsworth,* for (differing from him in very many points of taste) I do not know a man more to be venerated for uprightness of heart and loftiness of genius. Why he will sometimes choose to crawl upon all fours, when God has given him so noble a countenance to lift to heaven, I am as little able to account for as for his quarrelling (as you tell me) with the wrinkles which time and meditation have stamped his brow withal.

" I am obliged to conclude hastily, having long letters to write — Got wot upon very different subjects. I pray my kind respects to Mrs Chantrey. — Believe me, dear Allan, very truly yours, &c.

WALTER SCOTT."

The following letter touches on the dropping of the Bill which had been introduced by Government for the purpose of degrading the consort of George the Fourth; the riotous rejoicings of the Edinburgh mob on that occasion; and Scott's acquiescence in the request of the guardians of the young Duke of Buccleuch, that he should act as chancellor of the

* Mr. Cunningham had told Scott that Chantrey's bust of Wordsworth (another of his noblest works) was also to be produced at the Royal Academy's Exhibition for 1821.

jury about to *serve* his grace *heir* (as the law phrase goes) to the Scottish estates of his family.

"*To the Lord Montagu.*

"Edinburgh, 30th November 1820.

"My Dear Lord,

"I had your letter some time since, and have now to congratulate you on your two months' spell of labour-in-vain duty being at length at an end. The old sign of the Labour-in-vain Tavern was a fellow attempting to scrub a black-a-moor white; but the present difficulty seems to lie in showing that one *is* black. Truly, I congratulate the country on the issue; for, since the days of Queen Dollalolla* and the *Rumti-iddity* chorus in Tom Thumb, never was there so jolly a representative of royalty. A good ballad might be made by way of parody on Gay's Jonathan Wild,—

Her Majesty's trial has set us at ease,
And every wife round me may kiss if she please.

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* *Queen.* "What though I now am half-seas o'er,
I scorn to baulk this bout;
Of stiff rack-punch fetch bowls a score,
'Fore George, I'll see them out!

Chorus.—Rumti-iddity, row, row, row,
If we'd a good sup, we'd take it now."

FIELDING'S *Tom Thumb.*

We had the Marquis of Bute and Francis Jeffrey very brilliant in George Street, and I think one grocer besides. I was hard threatened by letter, but I caused my servant to say in the quarter where I thought the threatening came from, that I should suffer my windows to be broken like a Christian, but if anything else was attempted, I should become as great a heathen as the Dey of Algiers. We were passed over, but many houses were terribly *Cossaqué*, as was the phrase in Paris 1814 and 1815. The next night, being, like true Scotsmen, wise behind the hand, the bailies had a sufficient force sufficiently arranged, and put down every attempt to riot. If the same precautions had been taken before, the town would have been saved some disgrace, and the loss of at least £1000 worth of property.—Hay Donaldson* is getting stout again, and up to the throat in business; there is no getting a word out of him that does not smell of parchment and special service. He asked me, as it is to be a mere *law* service, to act as chancellor on the Duke's inquest, which honourable office I will of course undertake with great willingness, and discharge—I mean the *hospitable* part of it—to the best of my power. I think you are right to avoid a more extended service, as £1000 certainly would not clear the expense, as you would

* This gentleman, Scott's friend and confidential solicitor, had obtained (I believe), on his recommendation, the legal management of the Buccleuch affairs in Scotland.

have to dine at least four counties, and as sweetly sing, with Duke Wharton on Chevy Chase,

> Pity it were
> So much good wine to spill,
> As these bold freeholders would drink,
> Before they had their fill.

I hope we shall all live to see our young baron take his own chair, and feast the land in his own way. Ever your Lordship's most truly faithful

WALTER SCOTT.

"P. S.— In the illumination row, young Romilly was knocked down and robbed by the mob, just while he was in the act of declaiming on the impropriety of having constables and volunteers to interfere with the harmless mirth of the people."

"*To Mr Charles Scott;*

(Care of the Rev. John Williams, Lampeter.)

"Edinburgh, 19th Dec. 1820.

"My Dear Charles,

"We begin to be afraid that, in improving your head, you have lost the use of your fingers, or got so deep into the Greek and Latin grammar, that you have forgotten how to express yourself in your own language. To ease our anxious minds in these

important doubts, we beg you will write as soon as possible, and give us a full account of your proceedings, as I do not approve of long intervals of silence, or think that you need to stand very rigorously upon the exchange of letters, especially as mine are so much the longest.

"I rely upon it that you are now working hard in the classical mine, getting out the rubbish as fast as you can, and preparing yourself to collect the ore. I cannot too much impress upon your mind that *labour* is the condition which God has imposed on us in every station of life—there is nothing worth having, that can be had without it, from the bread which the peasant wins with the sweat of his brow, to the sports by which the rich man must get rid of his ennui. The only difference betwixt them is, that the poor man labours to get a dinner to his appetite, the rich man to get an appetite to his dinner. As for knowledge, it can no more be planted in the human mind without labour, than a field of wheat can be produced without the previous use of the plough. There is indeed this great difference, that chance or circumstances may so cause it that another shall reap what the farmer sows; but no man can be deprived, whether by accident or misfortune, of the fruits of his own studies; and the liberal and extended acquisitions of knowledge which he makes are all for his own use. Labour, my dear boy, therefore, and improve the time. In youth our steps are

light, and our minds are ductile, and knowledge is easily laid up. But if we neglect our spring, our summers will be useless and contemptible, our harvest will be chaff, and the winter of our old age unrespected and desolate.

"It is now Christmas-tide, and it comes sadly round to me as reminding me of your excellent grandmother, who was taken from us last year at this time. Do you, my dear Charles, pay attention to the wishes of your parents while they are with you, that you may have no self-reproach when you think of them at a future period.

"You hear the Welsh spoken much about you, and if you can pick it up without interfering with more important labours, it will be worth while. I suppose you can easily get a grammar and dictionary. It is, you know, the language spoken by the Britons before the invasion of the Anglo-Saxons, who brought in the principal ingredients of our present language, called from thence English. It was afterwards, however, much mingled with Norman French, the language of William the Conqueror and his followers; so if you can pick up a little of the Cambro-British speech, it will qualify you hereafter to be a good philologist, should your genius turn towards languages. Pray, have you yet learned who Howel Dha was?—Glendower you are well acquainted with by reading Shakspeare. The wild mysterious barbaric grandeur with which he has invested that chief-

tain has often struck me as very fine. I wish we had some more of him.

"We are all well here, and I hope to get to Abbotsford for a few days — they cannot be many — in the ensuing vacation, when I trust to see the planting has got well forward. All are well here, and Mr Cadell* is come back, and gives a pleasant account of your journey. Let me hear from you very soon, and tell me if you expect any *skating*, and whether there is any ice in Wales. I presume there will be a merry Christmas, and beg my best wishes on the subject to Mr Williams, his sister and family. The Lockharts dine with us, and the Scotts of Harden, James Scott† with his pipes, and I hope Captain Adam. We will remember your health in a glass of claret just about *six* o'clock at night; so that you will know exactly (allowing for variation of time) what we are doing at the same moment.

"But I think I have written quite enough to a young Welshman, who has forgot all his Scots kith, kin, and allies. Mamma and Anne send many loves. Walter came like a shadow, and so departed — after about ten days' stay. The effect was quite dramatic, for the door was flung open as we were about to go down to dinner, and Turner announced *Captain*

* Mr. Robert Cadell, of the house of Constable, had this year conveyed Charles Scott from Abbotsford to Lampeter.

† Sir Walter's cousin, a son of his uncle Thomas. See *ante*, Vol. I. p. 102.

Scott. We could not conceive who was meant, when in walked Walter as large as life. He is positively a new edition of the Irish giant. I beg my kind respects to Mr Williams. At his leisure I should be happy to have a line from him.—I am, my dear little boy, always your affectionate father,

WALTER SCOTT."

The next letter contains a brief allusion to an affair, which in the life of any other man of letters would have deserved to be considered as of some consequence. The late Sir James Hall of Dunglass resigned, in November 1820, the Presidency of the Royal Society of Edinburgh; and the Fellows, though they had on all former occasions selected a man of science to fill that post, paid Sir Walter the compliment of unanimously requesting him to be Sir James's successor in it. He felt and expressed a natural hesitation about accepting this honour — which at first sight seemed like invading the proper department of another order of scholars. But when it was urged upon him that the Society is really a double one — embracing a section for literature as well as one of science, — and that it was only due to the former to let it occasionally supply the chief of the whole body, Scott acquiesced in the flattering proposal; and his gentle skill was found effective, so long as he held the Chair, in maintaining and strengthening the tone of good feeling and good manners

which can alone render the meetings of such a Society either agreeable or useful. The new President himself soon began to take a lively interest in many of their discussions — those at least which pointed to any discovery of practical use; — and he by and by added some eminent men of science, with whom his acquaintance had hitherto been slight, to the list of his most valued friends: — I may mention in particular Dr, now Sir David, Brewster.

Sir Walter also alludes to an institution of a far different description, — that called "The Celtic Society of Edinburgh;" a club established mainly for the patronage of ancient Highland manners and customs, especially the use of "the Garb of Old Gaul" — though part of their funds have always been applied to the really important object of extending education in the wilder districts of the north. At their annual meetings Scott was, as may be supposed, a regular attendant. He appeared, as in duty bound, in the costume of the Fraternity, and was usually followed by "John of Skye," in a still more complete, or rather incomplete, style of equipment.

"*To the Lord Montagu, Ditton Park.*

"Edinburgh, 17th January 1821.

"My Dear Lord,

"We had a tight day of it on Monday last, both dry and wet. The dry part was as dry as may be,

consisting in rehearsing the whole lands of the Buccleuch estate for five mortal hours, although Donaldson had kindly selected a clerk whose tongue went over baronies, lordships, and regalities, at as high a rate of top speed as ever Eclipse displayed in clearing the course at Newmarket. The evening went off very well—considering that while looking forward with the natural feelings of hope and expectation on behalf of our young friend, most of us who were present could not help casting looks of sad remembrance on the days we had seen. However, we did very well, and I kept the chair till eleven, when we had coffee, and departed, "no very fou, but gaily yet." Besides the law gentlemen, and immediate agents of the family, I picked up on my own account Tom Ogilvie,* Sir Harry Hay Macdougal, Harden and his son, Gala, and Captain John Fergusson, whom I asked as from myself, stating that the party was to be quite private. I suppose there was no harm in this, and it helped us well on. I believe your nephew and my young chief enters life with as favourable auspices as could well attend him, for to few youths can attach so many good wishes, and *none* can look back to more estimable examples both in his father and grandfather. I think he will succeed to the warm and social affections of his relatives, which, if they

* The late Thomas Elliot Ogilvie, Esq. of Chesters, in Roxburghshire — one of Sir Walter's good friends among his country neighbours.

sometimes occasion pain to those who possess them, contain also the purest sources of happiness as well as of virtue.

"Our late Pitt meeting amounted to about 800, a most tremendous multitude. I had charge of a separate room, containing a detachment of about 250, and gained a headach of two days, by roaring to them for five or six hours almost incessantly. The Foxites had also a very numerous meeting, 500 at least, but sad scamps. We had a most formidable band of young men, almost all born gentlemen and zealous proselytes. We shall now begin to look anxiously to London for news. I suppose they will go by the ears in the House of Commons: but I trust Ministers will have a great majority. If not, they should go out, and let the others make the best of it with their acquitted Queen, who will be a ticklish card in their hand, for she is by nature *intrigante* more ways than one. The loss of Canning is a serious disadvantage. Many of our friends have good talents and good taste; but I think he alone has that higher order of parts which we call genius. I wish he had had more prudence to guide it. He has been a most unlucky politician. Adieu. Best love to all at Ditton, and great respect withal. My best compliments attend my young chief, now seated, to use an Oriental phrase, upon the *Musnud*. I am almost knocked up with public meetings, for the triple Hecate was a joke to my plurality of offices this week. On Friday I had my Pittite steward-

ship; on Monday my chancellorship; yesterday my presidentship of the Royal Society; for I had a meeting of that learned body at my house last night, where mulled wine and punch were manufactured and consumed according to the latest philosophical discoveries. Besides all this, I have before my eyes the terrors of a certain Highland Association, who dine bonnetted and *kilted* in the old fashion (all save myself, of course), and armed to the teeth. This is rather severe service; but men who wear broadswords, dirks, and pistols, are not to be neglected in these days; and the Gael are very loyal lads, so it is as well to keep up an influence with them. Once more, my dear Lord, farewell, and believe me always most truly yours, WALTER SCOTT."

In the course of the riotous week commemorated in the preceding letter, appeared Kenilworth, in 3 vols. post 8vo, like Ivanhoe, which form was adhered to with all the subsequent novels of the series. Kenilworth was one of the most successful of them all at the time of publication; and it continues, and, I doubt not, will ever continue to be placed in the very highest rank of prose fiction. The rich variety of character, and scenery, and incident in this novel, has never indeed been surpassed; nor, with the one exception of the Bride of Lammermoor, has Scott bequeathed us a deeper and more affecting tragedy than that of Amy Robsart.

CHAPTER LI.

Visit to London—Project of the Royal Society of Literature—Affairs of the 18th Hussars—Marriage of Captain Adam Fergusson—Letters to Lord Sidmouth, Lord Montagu, Allan Cunningham, Mrs Lockhart, and Cornet Scott.

1821.

Before the end of January 1821, Scott went to London at the request of the other Clerks of Session, that he might watch over the progress of an Act of Parliament, designed to relieve them from a considerable part of their drudgery, in attesting recorded deeds by signature; and his stay was prolonged until near the beginning of the Summer term of his Court. His letters while in London are mostly to his own family, and on strictly domestic topics; but I shall extract a few of them, chiefly (for reasons which I

have already sufficiently intimated) those addressed to his son the Cornet. I need not trespass on the reader's attention by any attempt to explain in detail the matters to which these letters refer. It will be seen that Sir Walter had heard some rumours of irregularity in the interior of the 18th Hussars; and that the consequent interference of the then Commander of the forces in Ireland, the late Sir David Baird, had been received in anything but a spirit of humility. The reports that reached Scott proved to have been most absurdly exaggerated; but nevertheless his observations on them seem well worth quoting. It so happened that the 18th was one of several regiments about to be reduced at this time; and as soon as that event took place, Cornet Scott was sent to travel in Germany, with a view to his improvement in the science of his profession. He afterwards spent a brief period, for the same purpose, in the Royal Military College of Sandhurst; and ere long he obtained a commission as lieutenant in the 15th or King's Hussars, in which distinguished corps his father lived to see him Major.

It will also be seen, that during this visit to London, Sir Walter was released from considerable anxiety on account of his daughter Sophia, whom he had left in a weak state of health at Edinburgh, by the intelligence of her safe accouchement of a boy, —John Hugh Lockhart, the "Hugh Littlejohn"

of the *Tales of a Grandfather*. The approaching marriage of Captain, now Sir Adam Fergusson, to which some jocular allusions occur, may be classed with these objects of family interest; and that event was the source of unmixed satisfaction to Scott, as it did not interrupt his enjoyment of his old friend's society in the country; for the Captain, though he then pitched a tent for himself, did so at a very short distance from Huntly Burn. I believe the ensuing extracts will need no further commentary.

"*To Mrs Lockhart, Great King Street, Edinburgh.*

"Ditton Park, Feb. 18, 1821.

"My Dearest Sophia,

"I received as much pleasure, and was relieved from as much anxiety, as ever I felt in my life, by Lockhart's kind note, which acquainted me with the happy period that has been put to your suffering, and, as I hope and trust, to the complaints which occasioned it. You are now, my dearest girl, beginning a new course of pleasures, anxieties, and duties, and the best I can wish for you is, that your little boy may prove the same dutiful and affectionate child which you have always been to me, and that God may give him a sound and healthy mind, with a good constitution of body — the greatest blessings

which this earth can bestow. Pray be extremely careful of yourself for some time. Young women are apt to injure their health by thinking themselves well too soon. I beg you to be cautious in this respect.

"The news of the young stranger's arrival was most joyfully received here, and his health and yours toasted in a bumper. Lady Anne is quite well, and Isabella also; and Lady Charlotte, who has rejoined them, is a most beautiful creature indeed. This place is all light and splendour, compared to London, where I was forced to use candles till ten o'clock at least. I have a gay time of it. To-morrow I return to town, and dine with old Sotheby; on Tuesday, with the Duke of Wellington; Wednesday with Croker, and so on. Love to L., the Captain, and the Violet, and give your bantling a kiss extraordinary for Grandpapa. I hope Mungo* approves of the child, for that is a serious point. There are no dogs in the hotel where I lodge, but a tolerably conversible cat, who eats a mess of cream with me in the morning. The little chief and his brother have come over from Eton to see me, so I must break off. — I am, my dear love, most affectionately yours, WALTER SCOTT."

* Mungo was a favourite Newfoundland dog.

" *To Walter Scott, Esq., Portobello Barracks, Dublin.*

" Waterloo Hotel, Jermyn Street,
Feb. 19, 1821.

" My Dear Walter,

" I have just received your letter. I send you a draught for £50, which you must make go as far as you can.

" There is what I have no doubt is a very idle report here, of your paying rather marked attention to one young lady in particular. I beg you would do nothing that can justify such a rumour, as it would excite my *highest displeasure* should you either entangle yourself or any other person. I am, and have always been, quite frank with you, and beg you will be equally so with me. One should, in justice to the young women they live with, be very cautious not to give the least countenance to such rumours. They are not easily avoided, but are always highly prejudicial to the parties concerned; and what begins in folly ends in serious misery — *avis au lecteur.*

" Believe me, dear Cornet, your affectionate father,
WALTER SCOTT.

" P. S. — I wish you could pick me up the Irish

lilt of a tune to 'Patrick Fleming.' The song begins—

'Patrick Fleming was a gallant soldier,
He carried his musket over his shoulder.
When I cock my pistol, when I draw my raper,
I make them stand in awe of me, for I am a taker.
Falala,' &c.

"From another verse in the same song, it seems the hero was in such a predicament as your own—

'If you be Peter Fleming, as I suppose you be, sir,
We are three pedlars walking on so free, sir.
We are three pedlars a-walking on to Dublin,
With nothing in our pockets to pay for our lodging.
Falala,' &c."

"*To Walter Scott, Esq., 18th Hussars, Cappoquin.*

"London, 17th March 1821.

"My Dear Commandant of Cappoquin,

"Wishing you joy of your new government, these are to inform you that I am still in London. The late aspersion on your regiment induced me to protract my stay here, with a view to see the Duke of York on your behalf, which I did yesterday. H. R. Highness expressed himself most obligingly disposed, and promised to consider what could best be done to forward your military education. I told him frankly, that in giving you to the King's service

I had done all that was in my power to show our attachment to his Majesty and the country which had been so kind to me, and that it was my utmost ambition that you should render yourself capable of serving them both well. He said he would give the affair his particular consideration, and see whether he could put you on the establishment at Sandhurst, without any violent infringement on the rules; and hinted that he would make an exception to the rule of seniority of standing and priority of application in your favour when an opportunity occurs.

"From H. R. H.'s very kind expressions I have little doubt you will have more than justice done you in the patronage necessary to facilitate your course through life; but it must be by your own exertions, my dearest boy, that you must render yourself qualified to avail yourself of the opportunities which you may have offered to you. Work therefore as hard as you can, and do not be discontented for want of assistance of masters, &c., because the knowledge which we acquire by our own unaided efforts, is much more tenaciously retained by the memory, while the exertion necessary to gain it strengthens the understanding. At the same time, I would enquire whether there may not be some Catholic priest, or Protestant clergyman, or scholar of any description, who, for love or money, would give you a little assistance occasionally. Such persons are to be found almost everywhere; not professed teachers,

but capable of smoothing the road to a willing student. Let me earnestly recommend in your reading to keep fast to particular hours, and suffer no one thing to encroach on the other.

"Charles's last letter was uncommonly steady, and prepared me for one from Mr Williams, in which he expresses satisfaction with his attention, and with his progress in learning, in a much stronger degree than formerly. This is truly comfortable, and may relieve me from the necessity of sending the poor boy to India.

"All in Edinburgh are quite well, and no fears exist, saving those of little Catherine* for the baby, lest the fairies take it away before the christening. I will send some books to you from hence, if I can find means to transmit them. I should like you to read with care the campaigns of Buonaparte, which have been written in French with much science.†

"I hope, indeed I am sure, I need not remind you to be very attentive to your duty. You have but a small charge, but it is a charge, and rashness or carelessness may lead to discredit in the commandant of Cappoquin, as well as in a field-marshal. In the exercise of your duty, be tender of the lower classes; and as you are strong be merciful. In this you will do your master good service, for show me

* Mrs. Lockhart's maid.

† This letter was followed by a copy of General Jomini's celebrated work.

the manners of the man, and I will judge those of the master.

"In your present situation, it may be interesting to you to know that the bill for Catholic Emancipation will pass the Commons without doubt, and very probably the Peers also, unless the Spiritual Lords make a great rally. Nobody here cares much about it, and if it does not pass this year, it will the next without doubt.

"Among other improvements, I wish you would amend your hand. It is a deplorable scratch, and far the worst of the family. Charles writes a firm good hand in comparison.

"You may address your next to Abbotsford, where I long to be, being heartily tired of fine company and fine living, from dukes and duchesses, down to turbot and plover's eggs. It is very well for a while, but to be kept at it makes one feel like a poodle dog compelled to stand for ever on his hind legs. — Most affectionately yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

During this visit to London, Sir Walter appears to have been consulted by several persons in authority as to the project of a Society of Literature, for which the King's patronage had been solicited, and which was established soon afterwards — though on a scale less extensive than had been proposed at the

outset. He expressed his views on this subject in writing at considerable length to his friend the Hon. John Villiers (afterwards Earl of Clarendon;*) but of that letter, described to me as a most admirable one, I have as yet failed to recover a copy. I have little doubt, that both the letter in question, and the following, addressed, soon after his arrival at Abbotsford, to the then Secretary of State for the Home Department, were placed in the hands of the King; but it seems probable, that whatever his Majesty may have thought of Scott's representations, he considered himself as already, in some measure, pledged to countenance the projected academy.

"*To the Right Hon. the Lord Viscount Sidmouth, &c. &c. &c., Whitehall.*

"Abbotsford, April 20, 1821.

"My Dear Lord,

"Owing to my retreat to this place, I was only honoured with your Lordship's letter yesterday. Whatever use can be made of my letter to stop the very ill contrived project to which it relates, will answer the purpose for which it was written. I do not well remember the terms in which my remonstrance to Mr Villiers was couched, for it was positively written betwixt sleeping and waking; but your Lordship will best judge how far the contents

* The third Earl (of the Villiersee) died in 1838.

may be proper for his Majesty's eye; and if the sentiments appear a little in dishabille, there is the true apology that they were never intended to go to Court. From more than twenty years' intercourse with the literary world, during which I have been more or less acquainted with every distinguished writer of my day, and, at the same time, an accurate student of the habits and tastes of the reading public, I am enabled to say, with a feeling next to certainty, that the plan can only end in something very unpleasant. At all events, his Majesty should get out of it; it is nonsense to say or suppose that any steps have been taken which, in such a matter, can or ought to be considered as irrevocable. The fact is, that nobody knows as yet how far the matter has gone beyond the *projet* of some well-meaning but misjudging persons, and the whole thing is asleep and forgotten so far as the public is concerned. The Spanish proverb says, 'God help me from my friends, and I will keep myself from my enemies;" and there is much sense in it; for the zeal of misjudging adherents often contrives, as in the present case, to turn to matter of reproach the noblest feelings on the part of a sovereign.

"Let men of letters fight their own way with the public, and let his Majesty, according as his own excellent taste and liberality dictate, honour with his patronage, expressed in the manner fitted to their studies and habits, those who are able to dis-

tinguish themselves, and alleviate by his bounty the distresses of such as, with acknowledged merit, may yet have been unfortunate in procuring independence. The immediate and direct favour of the Sovereign is worth the patronage of ten thousand societies. But your Lordship knows how to set all this in a better light than I can, and I would not wish the cause of letters in better hands.

"I am now in a scene changed as completely as possible from those in which I had the great pleasure of meeting your Lordship lately, riding through the moors on a pony, instead of traversing the streets in a carriage, and drinking whisky-toddy with mine honest neighbours, instead of Champaign and Burgundy. I have gained, however, in point of exact political information; for I find we know upon Tweedside with much greater accuracy what is done and intended in the Cabinet, than ever I could learn when living with the Ministers five days in the week. Mine honest Teviotdale friends, whom I left in a high Queen-fever, are now beginning to be somewhat ashamed of themselves, and to make as great advances towards retracting their opinion as they are ever known to do, which amounts to this: 'God judge me, Sir W——, the King's no been so dooms far wrong after a' in yon Queen's job like;' which, being interpreted, signifies, 'We will fight for the King to the death.' I do not know how it was in other places; but I never saw so sudden and violent

a delusion possess the minds of men in my life, even those of sensible, steady, well-intentioned fellows, that would fight knee-deep against the Radicals. It is well over, thank God.

"My best compliments attend the ladies. I ever am, my dear Lord, your truly obliged and faithful humble servant, WALTER SCOTT."

I have thought it right to insert the preceding letter, because it indicates with sufficient distinctness what Scott's opinions always were as to a subject on which, from his experience and position, he must have reflected very seriously. In how far the results of the establishment of the Royal Society of Literature have tended to confirm or to weaken the weight of his authority on these matters, I do not presume to have formed any judgment. He received, about the same time, a volume of poetry, by Allan Cunningham, which included the drama of Sir Marmaduke Maxwell; and I am happy to quote his letter of acknowledgment to that high-spirited and independent author in the same page with the foregoing monition to the dispensers of patronage.

"*To Mr Allan Cunningham, Ecclestone Street, Pimlico.*

"Abbotsford, 27th April.

"Dear Allan,

"Accept my kind thanks for your little modest

volume, received two days since. I was acquainted with most of the pieces, and yet I perused them all with renewed pleasure, and especially my old friend Sir Marmaduke with his new face, and by the assistance of an April sun, which is at length, after many a rough blast, beginning to smile on us. The drama has, in my conception, more poetical conception and poetical expression in it than most of our modern compositions. Perhaps, indeed, it occasionally sins even in the richness of poetical expression; for the language of passion, though bold and figurative, is brief and concise at the same time. But what would, in acting, be a more serious objection, is the complicated nature of the plot, which is very obscure. I hope you will make another dramatic attempt; and, in that case, I would strongly recommend that you should previously make a model or skeleton of your incidents, dividing them regularly into scenes and acts, so as to insure the dependence of one circumstance upon another, and the simplicity and union of your whole story. The common class of readers, and more especially of spectators, are thick-sculled enough, and can hardly comprehend what they see and hear, unless they are hemmed in, and guided to the sense at every turn.

"The unities of time and place have always appeared to me fopperies, as far as they require close observance of the French rules. Still, the nearer you can come to them, it is always, no doubt, the

better, because your action will be more probable. But the unity of action—I mean that continuity which unites every scene with the other, and makes the catastrophe the natural and probable result of all that has gone before—seems to me a critical rule which cannot safely be dispensed with. Without such a regular deduction of incidents, men's attention becomes distracted, and the most beautiful language, if at all listened to, creates no interest, and is out of place. I would give, as an example, the suddenly entertained, and as suddenly abandoned jealousy of Sir Marmaduke, p. 85, as a useless excresence in the action of the drama.

"I am very much unaccustomed to offer criticism, and when I do so, it is because I believe in my soul that I am endeavouring to pluck away the weeds which hide flowers well worthy of cultivation. In your case, the richnesss of your language, and fertility of your imagination, are the snares against which I would warn you. If the one had been poor, and the other costive, I would never have made remarks which could never do good, while they only gave pain. Did you ever read Savage's beautiful poem of the Wanderer? If not, do so, and you will see the fault which, I think, attaches to Lord Maxwell—a want of distinct precision and intelligibility about the story, which counteracts, especially with ordinary readers, the effect of beautiful and forcible diction, poetical imagery, and animated description.

"All this freedom you will excuse, I know, on the part of one who has the truest respect for the manly independence of character which rests for its support on honest industry, instead of indulging the foolish fastidiousness formerly supposed to be essential to the poetical temperament, and which has induced some men of real talents to become coxcombs —some to become sots—some to plunge themselves into want—others into the equal miseries of dependence, merely because, forsooth, they were men of genius, and wise above the ordinary, and, I say, the manly duties of human life.

'I'd rather be a kitten, and cry, Mew!' *

than write the best poetry in the world on condition of laying aside common sense in the ordinary transactions and business of the world; and therefore, dear Allan, I wish much the better to the muse whom you meet by the fireside in your hours of leisure when you have played your part manfully through a day of labour. I should like to see her making those hours also a little profitable. Perhaps something of the dramatic romance, if you could hit on a good subject, and combine the scenes well, might answer. A beautiful thing with appropriate music, scenes, &c., might be woven out of the Mermaid of Galloway.

* 1*st King Henry IV. Act III. Scene* 1.

"When there is any chance of Mr Chantrey coming this way, I hope you will let me know; and if you come with him, so much the better. I like him as much for his manners as for his genius.

'He is a man without a clagg;
His heart is frank without a flaw.'

"This is a horrible long letter for so vile a correspondent as I am. Once more, my best thanks for the little volume, and believe me yours truly,

WALTER SCOTT."

I now return to Sir Walter's correspondence with the Cornet at Cappoquin.

"*To Walter Scott, Esq.*, 18*th Hussars.*

"Abbotsford, April 21, 1821.

"My Dear Walter,

"....A democrat in any situation is but a silly sort of fellow, but a democratical soldier is worse than an ordinary traitor by ten thousand degrees, as he forgets his military honour, and is faithless to the master whose bread he eats. Three distinguished heroes of this class have arisen in my time—Lord Edward Fitzgerald, Colonel Despard, and Captain Thistlewood—and, with the contempt and abhorrence of all men, they died the death of infamy and guilt. If a man of honour is unhappy

enough to entertain opinions inconsistent with the service in which he finds himself, it is his duty at once to resign his commission; in acting otherwise he disgraces himself for ever. . . . . The reports are very strange, also, with respect to the private conduct of certain officers. . . . . Gentlemen maintain their characters even in following their most licentious pleasures, otherwise they resemble the very scavengers in the streets. . . . . I had written you a long letter on other subjects, but these circumstances have altered my plans, as well as given me great uneasiness on account of the effects which the society you have been keeping may have had on your principles, both political and moral. Be very frank with me on this subject. I have a title to expect perfect sincerity, having always treated you with openness on my part.

"Pray write immediately, and at length.—I remain your affectionate father, WALTER SCOTT."

"*To the Same.*

"Abbotsford, April 28, 1821.

"Dear Walter,

". . . . . The great point in the meanwhile is to acquire such preliminary information as may render you qualified to profit by Sandhurst when you get thither. Amongst my acquaintance, the men of

greatest information have been those who seemed but indifferently situated for the acquisition of it, but who exerted themselves in proportion to the infrequency of their opportunities.

"The noble Captain Fergusson was married on Monday last. I was present at the bridal, and I assure you the like hath not been seen since the days of Lesmahago. Like his prototype, the Captain advanced in a jaunty military step, with a kind of leer on his face that seemed to quiz the whole affair. You should write to your brother sportsman and soldier, and wish the veteran joy of his entrance into the band of Benedicts. Odd enough that I should christen a grandchild and attend the wedding of a contemporary within two days of each other. I have sent John of Skye, with Tom, and all the rabblement which they can collect, to play the pipes, shout, and fire guns below the Captain's windows this morning; and I am just going over to hover about on my pony, and witness their reception. The happy pair returned to Huntly Burn on Saturday; but yesterday being Sunday, we permitted them to enjoy their pillows in quiet. This morning they must not expect to get off so well. Pray write soon, and give me the history of your still-huntings, &c. — Ever yours affectionately, W. Scott."

" To Charles Scott, Esq.

(Care of the Rev. Mr Williams, Lampeter.)

" Abbotsford, 9th May 1821.

" My Dear Charles,

" I am glad to find, by your letter, just received, that you are reading Tacitus with some relish. His style is rather quaint and enigmatical, which makes it difficult to the student; but then his pages are filled with such admirable apothegms and maxims of political wisdom, as infer the deepest knowledge of human nature; and it is particularly necessary that any one who may have views as a public speaker should be master of his works, as there is neither ancient nor modern who affords such a selection of admirable quotations. You should exercise yourself frequently in trying to make translations of the passages which most strike you, trying to invest the sense of Tacitus in as good English as you can. This will answer the double purpose of making yourself familiar with the Latin author, and giving you the command of your own language, which no person will ever have who does not study English composition in early life . . . . . I conclude somewhat abruptly, having trees to cut, and saucy Tom watching me like a Calmuck with the axe in his hand. — Yours affectionately,

W. Scott "

" *To Walter Scott, Esq.*, 18*th Hussars, Cappoquin.*

" Abbotsford, 10th May 1821.

" Dear Walter,

" I wrote yesterday, but I am induced immediately to answer your letter, because I think you expect from it an effect upon my mind different from what it produces. A man may be violent and outrageous in his liquor, but wine seldom makes a gentleman a blackguard, or instigates a loyal man to utter sedition. Wine unveils the passions and throws away restraint, but it does not create habits or opinions which did not previously exist in the mind. Besides, what sort of defence is this of intemperance? I suppose if a private commits riot, or is disobedient in his cups, his officers do not admit whisky to be an excuse. I have seen enough of that sort of society where habitual indulgence drowned at last every distinction between what is worthy and unworthy, and I have seen young men with the fairest prospects turn out degraded miserable outcasts before their life was half spent, merely from soaking and sotting, and the bad habits these naturally lead to. You tell me * * * and * * * frequent good society and are well received in it, and I am very glad to hear this is the case. But such stories as these will soon occasion their seclusion from the *best* company. There may remain, indeed, a large enough

circle, where ladies, who are either desirous to fill their rooms or to marry their daughters, will continue to receive any young man in a showy uniform, however irregular in private life; but if these cannot be called *bad* company, they are certainly anything but *very good*, and the facility of access makes the *entrée* of little consequence.

"I mentioned in my last that you were to continue in the 18th until the regiment went to India, and that I trusted you would get the step within the twelve months that the corps yet remains in Europe, which will make your exchange easier. But it is of far more importance that you learn to command yourself, than that you should be raised higher in commanding others. It gives me pain to write to you in terms of censure, but *my duty* must be done, else I cannot expect you to do *yours*. All here are well and send love.—I am your affectionate father,

WALTER SCOTT."

"*To the Same.*

"Edinburgh, 15th May 1821.

"Dear Walter,

"I have your letter of May 6th, to which it is unnecessary to reply very particularly. I would only insinuate to you that the *lawyers* and *gossips* of Edinburgh, whom your military politeness handsomely classes together in writing to a lawyer, know

and care as little about the 18th as they do about the 19th, 20th, or 21st, or any other regimental number which does not happen for the time to be at Piershill, or in the Castle. Do not fall into the error and pedantry of young military men, who, living much together, are apt to think themselves and their actions the subject of much talk and rumour among the public at large. — I will transcribe Fielding's account of such a person, whom he met with on his voyage to Lisbon, which will give two or three hours' excellent amusement when you choose to peruse it: —

'In his conversation it is true there was something military enough, as it consisted chiefly of oaths, and of the great actions and wise sayings of Jack, Will, and Tom of *ours*, a phrase eternally in his mouth, and he seemed to conclude that it conveyed to all the officers such a degree of public notoriety and importance that it entitled him, like the head of a profession, or a first minister, to be the subject of conversation amongst those who had not the least personal acquaintance with him.'

Avoid this silly narrowness of mind, my dear boy, which only makes men be looked on in the world with ridicule and contempt. Lawyer and gossip as I may be, I suppose you will allow I have seen something of life in most of its varieties; as much at least as if I had been, like you, eighteen months in a cavalry regiment, or, like Beau Jackson in Roderick Random, had cruized for half-a-year in the chops of the Channel. Now, I have never remarked

any one, be he soldier, or divine, or lawyer, that was exclusively attached to the narrow habits of his own profession, but what such person became a great twaddle in good society, besides what is of much more importance, becoming narrow-minded and ignorant of all general information.

"That this letter may not be unacceptable in all its parts, I enclose your allowance without stopping anything for the hackney. Take notice, however, my dear Walter, that this is to last you till midsummer. We came from Abbotsford yesterday, and left all well, excepting that Mr Laidlaw lost his youngest child, an infant, very unexpectedly. We found Sophia, Lockhart, and their child, in good health, and all send love.—I remain your affectionate father, WALTER SCOTT."

"*To Walter Scott, Esq.*, 18*th Hussars*.

"Edinburgh, 26th May 1821.

"My Dear Walter,

"I see you are of the mind of the irritable prophet Jonah, who persisted in maintaining 'he did well to be angry,' even when disputing with Omnipotence. I am aware that Sir David is considered as a severe and ill-tempered man; and I remember a story that, when report came to Europe that Tippoo's prisoners (of whom Baird was one) were chained together two and two, his mother said,

'God pity the poor lad that's chained to *our Davie.*' But though it may be very true that he may have acted towards you with caprice and severity, yet you are always to remember,—1*st*, That in becoming a soldier you have subjected yourself to the caprice and severity of superior officers, and have no comfort except in contemplating the prospect of commanding others in your turn. In the meanwhile, you have in most cases no remedy so useful as patience and submission. But, 2*dly*, As you seem disposed to admit that you yourselves have been partly to blame, I submit to you, that in turning the magnifying end of the telescope on Sir D.'s faults, and the diminishing one on your own, you take the least useful mode of considering the matter. By studying *his* errors, you can acquire no knowledge that will be useful to you till you become Commander-in-Chief in Ireland, whereas, by reflecting on *your own*, Cornet Scott and his companions may reap some immediate moral advantage. Your fine of a dozen of claret, upon any one who shall introduce females into your mess in future, reminds me of the rule of a country club, that whoever 'behaved ungenteel,' should be fined in a pot of porter. Seriously, I think there was bad taste in the style of the forfeiture.

"I am well pleased with your map, which is very business-like. There was a great battle fought between the English and native Irish near the Blackwater, in which the former were defeated, and

Bagenal the Knight-Marshal killed. Is there any remembrance of this upon the spot? There is a clergyman in Lismore, Mr John Graham—originally, that is by descent, a borderer. He lately sent me a manuscript which I intend to publish, and I wrote to him enclosing a cheque on Coutts. I wish you could ascertain if he received my letter safe. You can call upon him with my compliments. You need only say I was desirous to know if he had received a letter from me lately. The manuscript was written by a certain Mr Gwynne, a Welsh loyalist in the great Civil War, and afterwards an officer in the guards of Charles II. This will be an object for a ride to you.*

"I presided last night at the dinner of the Celtic Society, 'all plaided and plumed in their tartan array,' and such jumping, skipping, and screaming you never saw. Chief Baron Shepherd dined with us, and was very much pleased with the extreme enthusiasm of the Gael when liberated from the thraldom of breeches. You were voted a member by acclamation, which will cost me a tartan dress for your long limbs when you come here. If the King takes Scotland in coming or going to Ireland (as has

* The Rev. John Graham is known as the author of a "History of the Siege of Londonderry," "Annals of Ireland," and various political tracts. Sir Walter Scott published Gwynne's Memoirs, with a preface, &c., in 1822.

been talked of), I expect to get you leave to come over.—I remain your affectionate father,

WALTER SCOTT.

"P. S.—I beg you will not take it into your wise noddle that I will act either hastily or unadvisedly in your matters. I have been more successful in life than most people, and know well how much success depends, first upon desert, and then on knowledge of the *carte de pays.*"

The following letter begins with an allusion to a visit which Captain Fergusson, his bride, and his youngest sister, Miss Margaret Fergusson, had been paying at Ditton Park:—

"*To the Lord Montagu, &c. &c.*

"Edinburgh, 21st May 1821.

"My Dear Lord,

"I was much diverted with the account of Adam and Eve's visit to Ditton, which, with its surrounding moat, might make no bad emblem of Eden, but for the absence of snakes and fiends. He is a very singular fellow; for, with all his humour and knowledge of the world, he by nature is a remarkably shy and modest man, and more afraid of the possibility of intrusion than would occur to any one who only sees him in the full stream of society. His

sister Margaret is extremely like him in the turn of thought and of humour, and he has two others who are as great curiosities in their way. The eldest is a complete old maid, with all the gravity and shyness of the character, but not a grain of its bad humour or spleen; on the contrary, she is one of the kindest and most motherly creatures in the world. The second, Mary, was in her day a very pretty girl; but her person became deformed, and she has the sharpness of features with which that circumstance is sometimes attended. She rises very early in the morning, and roams over all my wild land in the neighbourhood, wearing the most complicated pile of handkerchiefs of different colours on her head, and a stick double her own height in her hand, attended by two dogs, whose powers of yelping are truly terrific. With such garb and accompaniments, she has very nearly established the character in the neighbourhood of being *something no canny*—and the urchins of Melrose and Darnick are frightened from gathering hazel-nuts and cutting wands in my cleugh, by the fear of meeting *the daft lady*. With all this quizzicality, I do not believe there ever existed a family with so much mutual affection and such an overflow of benevolence to all around them, from men and women down to hedge-sparrows and lame ass-colts, more than one of which they have taken under their direct and special protection.

"I am sorry there should be occasion for caution

in the case of little Duke Walter, but it is most lucky that the necessity is early and closely attended to. How many actual valetudinarians have outlived all their robust contemporaries, and attained the utmost verge of human life, without ever having enjoyed what is usually called high health. This is taking the very worst view of the case, and supposing the constitution habitually delicate. But how often has the strongest and best confirmed health succeeded to a delicate childhood—and such, I trust, will be the Duke's case. I cannot help thinking that this temporary recess from Eton may be made subservient to Walter's improvement in general literature, and particularly in historical knowledge. The habit of reading useful, and at the same time entertaining books of history, is often acquired during the retirement which delicate health in convalescence imposes on us. I remember we touched on this point at Ditton; and I think again, that though classical learning be the *Shibboleth* by which we judge, generally speaking, of the proficiency of the youthful scholar, yet, when this has been too exclusively and pedantically impressed on his mind as the one thing needful, he very often finds he has entirely a new course of study to commence, just at the time when life is opening all its busy or gay scenes before him, and when study of any kind becomes irksome.

" For this species of instruction I do not so much approve of tasks and set hours for serious reading,

as of the plan of endeavouring to give a taste for history to the youths themselves, and suffering them to gratify it in their own way and at their own time. For this reason I would not be very scrupulous what books they began with, or whether they began at the middle or end. The knowledge which we acquire of free will and by spontaneous exertion, is like food eaten with appetite—it digests well, and benefits the system ten times more than the double cramming of an alderman. If a boy's attention can be drawn in conversation to any interesting point of history, and the book is pointed out to him where he will find the particulars conveyed in a lively manner, he reads the passage with so much pleasure that he very naturally recurs to the book at the first unoccupied moment to try if he cannot pick more amusement out of it; and when once a lad gets the spirit of information, he goes on himself with little trouble but that of selecting for him the best and most agreeable books. I think Walter has naturally some turn for history and historical anecdote, and would be disposed to read as much as could be wished in that most useful line of knowledge;—for in the eminent situation he is destined to by his birth, acquaintance with the history and institutions of his country, and her relative position with respect to others, is a *sine qua non* to his discharging its duties with propriety. All this is extremely like prosing, so I will harp on that string no longer.

"Kind compliments to all at Ditton; you say nothing of your own rheumatism. I am here for the session, unless the wind should blow me south to see the coronation, and I think 800 miles rather a long journey to see a show.

I am always, my dear Lord,

Yours, very affectionately,

WALTER SCOTT."

CHAPTER LII.

Illness and Death of John Ballantyne—Extract from his Pocketbook—Letters from Blair-Adam—Castle-Campbell—Sir Samuel Shepherd—"Bailie Mackay," &c.—Coronation of George IV.—Correspondence with James Hogg and Lord Sidmouth—Letter on the Coronation—Anecdotes—Allan Cunningham's Memoranda—Completion of Chantrey's Bust.

1821.

On the 4th of June, Scott being then on one of his short Sessional visits to Abbotsford, received the painful intelligence that his friend John Ballantyne's maladies had begun to assume an aspect of serious and even immediate danger. The elder brother made the communication in these terms:—

"*To Sir Walter Scott, Bart. of Abbotsford, Melrose.*

"Edinburgh, Sunday, 3d June 1821.

"Dear Sir,

"I have this morning had a most heart-breaking letter from poor John, from which the following is an extract. You will judge how it has affected me, who, with all his peculiarities of temper, love him very much. He says—

'A spitting of blood has commenced, and you may guess the situation into which I am plunged. We are all accustomed to consider death as certainly inevitable; but his obvious approach is assuredly the most detestable and abhorrent feeling to which human nature can be subject.'

"This is truly doleful. There is something in it more absolutely bitter to my heart than what I have otherwise suffered. I look back to my mother's peaceful rest, and to my infant's blessedness—if life be not the extinguishable worthless spark which I cannot think it—but here, cut off in the very middle of life, with good means and strong powers of enjoying it, and nothing but reluctance and repining at the close—I say the truth when I say that I would joyfully part with my right arm, to avert the approaching result. Pardon this, dear sir; my heart and soul are heavy within me. * * * * * * * *

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * With the deepest respect and gratitude, J. B."

At the date of this letter, the invalid was in Roxburghshire; but he came to Edinburgh a day or two afterwards, and died there on the 16th of the same month. I accompanied Sir Walter when one of their last interviews took place, and John's deathbed was a thing not to be forgotten. We sat by him for perhaps an hour, and I think half that space was occupied with his predictions of a speedy end, and details of his last will, which he had just been executing, and which lay on his coverlid; the other half being given, five minutes or so at a time, to questions and remarks, which intimated that the hope of life was still flickering before him—nay, that his interest in all its concerns remained eager. The proof-sheets of a volume of his Novelist's Library lay also by his pillow; and he passed from them to his will, and then back to them, as by jerks and starts the unwonted veil of gloom closed upon his imagination, or was withdrawn again. He had, as he said, left his great friend and patron £2000 towards the completion of the new library at Abbotsford—and the spirit of the auctioneer virtuoso flashed up as he began to describe what would, he thought, be the best style and arrangement of the book-shelves. He was interrupted by an agony of asthma, which left him with hardly any signs of life; and ultimately he

did expire in a fit of the same kind. Scott was visibly and profoundly shaken by this scene and its sequel. As we stood together a few days afterwards, while they were smoothing the turf over John's remains in the Canongate Churchyard, the heavens, which had been dark and slaty, cleared up suddenly, and the midsummer sun shone forth in his strength. Scott, ever awake to the "skiey influences," cast his eye along the overhanging line of the Calton Hill, with its gleaming walls and towers, and then turning to the grave again, "I feel," he whispered in my ear, "I feel as if there would be less sunshine for me from this day forth."

As we walked homewards, Scott told me, among other favourable *traits* of his friend, one little story which I must not omit. He remarked one day to a poor student of divinity attending his auction, that he looked as if he were in bad health. The young man assented with a sigh. "Come," said Ballantyne, "I think I ken the secret of a sort of draft that would relieve you—particularly," he added, handing him a cheque for £5 or £10—"particularly, my dear, if taken upon an empty stomach."

John died in his elder brother's house in St John Street; a circumstance which it gives me pleasure to record, as it confirms the impression of their affectionate feelings towards each other at this time, which the reader must have derived from James's letter to Scott last quoted. Their confidence and cordiality

had undergone considerable interruption in the latter part of John's life; but the close was in all respects fraternal.

A year and half before John's exit, namely, on the last day of 1819, he happened to lay his hand on an old pocketbook which roused his reflections, and he filled two or three of its pages with a brief summary of the most active part of his life, which I think it due to his character, as well as Sir Walter Scott's, to transcribe in this place.

"31st Dec. 1819. In moving a bed from the fire-place to-day up stairs, I found an old memorandum-book, which enables me to trace the following recollections of *this day*, the last of the year.

"1801. A shopkeeper in Kelso; at this period my difficulties had not begun in business; was well, happy, and 27 years old; new then in a connexion which afterwards gave me great pain, but can never be forgotten.

"1802. 28 old: In Kelso as before — could scarcely be happier — hunted, shot, kept *******'s company, and neglected business, the fruits whereof I soon found.

"1803. 29: Still fortunate, and happy from same cause. James in Edinburgh thriving as a printer. When I was ennuied at home, visited him. Business neglected every way.

"1804. 30: Material change; getting into difficulties; all wrong, and changes in every way approaching.

"1805. 31: All consummated; health miserable all summer and **** designated in an erased mem., *the scoundrel*. I yet recollect the cause — can I ever forget it? My furniture, goods, &c. sold at Kelso, previous to my going to Edinburgh to become

my brother's clerk; whither I *did* go, for which God be praised eternally, on Friday, 3d January 1806, on £200 a-year. My effects at Kelso, with labour, paid my debts, and left me penny-less.

"From this period till 1808. 34: I continued in this situation — then the scheme of a bookselling concern in Hanover Street was adopted, which I was to manage; it was £300 a-year, and one-fourth of the profits besides.

"1809. 35: Already the business in Hanover Street getting into difficulty, from our ignorance of its nature, and most extravagant and foolish advances from its funds to the printing concern. I ought to have resisted this, but I was thoughtless, although not young, or rather reckless, and lived on as long as I could make ends meet.

"1810. 36: Bills increasing — the destructive system of accommodations adopted.

"1811. 37: Bills increased to a most fearful degree. Sir Wm. Forbes and Co. shut their account. No bank would discount with us, and everything leading to irretrievable failure.

"1812. 38: The first partner stepped in, at a crisis so tremendous, that it shakes my soul to think of it. By the most consummate wisdom, and resolution, and unheard-of exertions, he put things in a train that finally (so early as 1817) paid even himself (who ultimately became the sole creditor of the house) *in full*, with a balance of a thousand pounds.

"1813. 39: In business as a literary auctioneer in Prince's Street; from which period to the present I have got gradually forward, both in that line and as third of a partner of the works of the Author of Waverley, so that I am now, at 45, worth about (I owe £2000) £5000, with, however, alas! many changes — my strong constitution much broken; my father and mother dead, and James estranged — the chief enjoyment and glory of my life being the possession of the friendship and confidence of the greatest of men."

In communicating John's death to the Cornet, Sir Walter says, "I have had a very great loss in poor John Ballantyne, who is gone, after a long illness. He persisted to the very last in endeavouring to take exercise, in which he was often imprudent, and was up and dressed the very morning before his death. In his will the grateful creature has left me a legacy of £2000, liferented, however, by his wife; and the rest of his little fortune goes betwixt his two brothers. I shall miss him very much, both in business, and as an easy and lively companion, who was eternally active and obliging in whatever I had to do."

I am sorry to take leave of John Ballantyne with the remark, that his last will was a document of the same class with too many of his *states* and *calendars*. So far from having £2000 to bequeath to Sir Walter, he died as he had lived, ignorant of the situation of his affairs, and deep in debt.*

The two following letters, written at Blair-Adam, where the Club were, as usual, assembled for the

* No specimen of John's inaccuracy as to business-statements could be pointed out more extraordinary than his assertion in the above sketch of his career, that the bookselling concern, of which he had had the management, was finally wound up with a balance of £1000 in favour of the first partner. At the time he refers to (1817), John's name was on floating bills to the extent of at least £10,000, representing *part* of the debt which had been accumulated on the bookselling house, and which, on its dissolution, was assumed by the printing company in the Canongate. [1839.]

dog-days, have been selected from among several which Scott at this time addressed to his friends in the South, with the view of promoting Mr Mackay's success in his *debut* on the London boards as Bailie Jarvie.

"*To Miss Joanna Bailie, Hampstead.*

"The immediate motive of my writing to you, my dearest friend, is to make Mrs Agnes and you aware that a Scots performer, called Mackay, is going up to London to play Bailie Nicol Jarvie for a single night at Covent Garden, and to beg you of all dear loves to go and see him; for, taking him in that single character, I am not sure I ever saw anything in my life possessing so much truth and comic effect at the same time: he is completely the personage of the drama, the purse-proud consequential magistrate, humane and irritable in the same moment, and the true Scotsman in every turn of thought and action; his variety of feelings towards Rob Roy, whom he likes, and fears, and despises, and admires, and pities all at once, is exceedingly well expressed. In short, I never saw a part better sustained, certainly; I pray you to collect a party of Scotch friends to see it. I have written to Sotheby to the same purpose, but I doubt whether the exhibition will prove as satisfac-factory to those who do not know the original from which the resemblance is taken. I observe the Eng-

lish demand (as is natural), broad caricature in the depicting of national peculiarities: they did so as to the Irish till Jack Johnstone taught them better, and at first I should fear Mackay's reality will seem less ludicrous than Liston's humorous extravagances. So let it not be said that a dramatic genius of Scotland wanted the countenance and protection of Joanna Baillie: the Doctor and Mrs Baillie will be much diverted if they go also, but somebody said to me that they were out of town. The man, I am told, is perfectly respectable in his life and habits, and consequently deserves encouragement every way. There is a great difference betwixt his *bailie* and all his other performances: one would think the part made for him, and him for the part—and yet I may do the poor fellow injustice, and what we here consider as a falling off may arise from our identifying Mackay so completely with the worthy Glasgow magistrate, that recollections of Nicol Jarvie intrude upon us at every corner, and mar the personification of any other part which he may represent for the time.

"I am here for a couple of days with our Chief Commissioner, late Willie Adam, and we had yesterday a delightful stroll to Castle Campbell, the Rumbling Brig, Cauldron Linns, &c. The scenes are most romantic, and I know not by what fatality it has been, that living within a step of them, I never visited any of them before. We had Sir Samuel Shepherd with us, a most delightful person, but with

too much English fidgetiness about him for crags and precipices,—perpetually afraid that rocks would give way under his weight which had over-brow'd the torrent for ages, and that good well-rooted trees, moored so as to resist ten thousand tempests, would fall because he grasped one of their branches: he must certainly be a firm believer in the simile of the lover of your native land, who complains—

> 'I leant my back unto an aik,
> I thought it was a trusty tree,
> But first it bow'd and then it brake,' &c. &c &c.*

Certes these Southrons lack much the habits of the wood and wilderness, for here is a man of taste and genius, a fine scholar and a most interesting companion, haunted with fears that would be entertained by no shopkeeper from the Luckenbooths or the Saut Market. A sort of *Cockneyism* of one kind or another pervades their men of professional habits, whereas every Scotchman, with very few exceptions, holds country exercises of all kinds to be part of his nature, and is ready to become a traveller or even a soldier on the slightest possible notice. The habits of the moorfowl shooting, salmon-fishing, and so forth, may keep this much up among the gentry, a name which our pride and pedigree extend so much wider than in England; and it is worth notice that

* Ballad of the Marchioness of Douglas, "O waly, waly, up yon bank!" &c.

these amusements being cheap and tolerably easy come at by all the petty dunnywassals, have a more general influence on the national character than fox-hunting, which is confined to those who can mount and keep a horse worth at least 100 guineas. But still this hardly explains the general and wide difference betwixt the countries in this particular. Happen how it will, the advantage is much in favour of Scotland: it is true that it contributes to prevent our producing such very accomplished lawyers, divines, or artisans * as when the whole mind is bent with undivided attention upon attaining one branch of knowledge, — but it gives a strong and muscular character to the people in general, and saves men from all sorts of causeless fears and flutterings of the heart, which give quite as much misery as if there were real cause for entertaining apprehension. This is not furiously to the purpose of my letter, which, after recommending Monsieur Mackay, was to tell

* The great engineer, James Watt of Birmingham — in whose talk Scott took much delight — told him, that though hundreds probably of his northern countrymen had sought employment at his establishment, he never could get one of them to become a first-rate artisan. "Many of them," said he, "were too good for that, and rose to be valuable clerks and book-keepers; but those incapable of this sort of advancement had always the same insuperable aversion to toiling so long at any one point of mechanism as to gain the highest wages among the workmen." I have no doubt Sir Walter was thinking of Mr Watt's remark when he wrote the sentence in the text.

you that we are all well and happy. Sophia is getting stout and pretty, and is one of the wisest and most important little mammas that can be seen anywhere. Her bower is *bigged in gude green wood*, and we went last Saturday in a body to enjoy it, and to consult about furniture, and we have got the road stopt which led up the hill, so it is now quite solitary and approached through a grove of trees, actual well grown trees, not Lilliputian forests like those of Abbotsford. The season is dreadfully backward. Our ashes and oaks are not yet in leaf, and will not be, I think, in anything like full foliage this year, such is the rigour of the east winds.—Always, my dear and much respected friend, most affectionately yours, W. SCOTT.

"Blair-Adam, 11 June 1821,
In full sight of Lochleven.

"P. S.—Pray read, or have read to you by Mrs Agnes, the *Annals of the Parish*. Mr Galt wrote the worst tragedies ever seen, and has now written a most excellent novel, if it can be called so."

"*To the Lord Montagu, &c. &c., London.*

"Blair-Adam, June 11, 1821.

"My Dear Lord,

"There is a man going up from Edinburgh to play one night at Covent Garden, whom, as having

the very unusual power of presenting on the stage a complete Scotsman, I am very desirous you should see. He plays Bailie Nicol Jarvie in Rob Roy, but with a degree of national truth and understanding, which makes the part equal to anything I have ever seen on the stage, and I have seen all the best comedians for these forty years. I wish much, if you continue in town till he comes up, that you would get into some private box and take a look of him. Sincerely, it is a real treat — the English will not enjoy it, for it is not broad enough, or sufficiently caricatured for their apprehensions, but to a Scotsman it is inimitable, and you have the Glasgow Bailie before you, with all his bustling conceit and importance, his real benevolence, and his irritable habits. He will want in London a fellow who, in the character of the Highland turnkey, held the backhand to him admirably well. I know how difficult it is for folks of condition to get to the theatre, but this is worth an exertion, and, besides, the poor man (who I understand is very respectable in private life) will be, to use an admirable simile (by which one of your father's farmers persuaded the Duke to go to hear his son, a probationer in divinity, preach his first sermon in the town of Ayr), *like a cow in a fremd loaning*, and glad of Scots countenance.

"I am glad the Duke's cold is better — his stomach will not be put to those trials which ours underwent in our youth, when deep drinking was

the fashion. I hope he will always be aware, however, that his is not a strong one.

"Campbell's Lives of the Admirals is an admirable book, and I would advise your Lordship e'en to redeem your pledge to the Duke on some rainy day. You do not run the risk from the perusal which my poor mother apprehended. She always alleged it sent her eldest son to the navy, and did not see with indifference any of her younger olive branches engaged with Campbell except myself, who stood in no danger of the cockpit or quarterdeck. I would not swear for Lord John though. Your Lordship's tutor was just such a well-meaning person as mine, who used to take from me old Lindsay of Pitscottie, and set me down to get by heart Rollin's infernal list of the Shepherd Kings, whose hard names could have done no good to any one on earth, unless he had wished to raise the devil, and lacked language to conjure with. — Always, my dear Lord, most truly yours, WALTER SCOTT."

The coronation of George IV., preparations for which were (as has been seen) in active progress by March 1820, had been deferred, in consequence of the unhappy affair of the Queen's Trial. The 19th of July 1821, was now announced for this solemnity. and Sir Walter resolved to be among the spectators. It occurred to him that if the Ettrick Shepherd were to accompany him, and produce some memorial of

the scene likely to catch the popular ear in Scotland, good service might thus be done to the cause of loyalty. But this was not his only consideration. Hogg had married a handsome and most estimable young woman, a good deal above his own original rank in life, the year before; and expecting with her a dowry of £1000, he had forthwith revived the grand ambition of an earlier day, and become a candidate for an extensive farm on the Buccleuch estate, at a short distance from Altrive Lake. Various friends, supposing his worldly circumstances to be much improved, had supported his application, and Lord Montagu had received it in a manner for which the Shepherd's letters to Scott express much gratitude. Misfortune pursued the Shepherd — the unforeseen bankruptcy of his wife's father interrupted the stocking of the sheep walk; and the arable part of the new possession was sadly mismanaged by himself. Scott hoped that a visit to London, and a coronation poem, or pamphlet, might end in some pension or post that would relieve these difficulties, and he wrote to Hogg, urging him to come to Edinburgh, and embark with him for the great city. Not doubting that this proposal would be eagerly accepted, he, when writing to Lord Sidmouth, to ask a place for himself in the Hall and Abbey of Westminster, mentioned that Hogg was to be his companion, and begged suitable accommodation for him also. Lord Sidmouth, being overwhelmed with business con-

nected with the approaching pageant, answered by the pen of the Under-Secretary of State, Mr Hobhouse, that Sir Walter's wishes, both as to himself and the Shepherd, should be gratified, *provided* they would both dine with him the day after the coronation, in Richmond park, "where," says the letter before me, "his Lordship will invite the Duke of York and a few other Jacobites to meet you." All this being made known to the tenant of Mount-Benger, he wrote to Scott, as he says, "with the tear in his eye," to signify, that if he went to London, he must miss attending the great annual Border fair, held on St Boswell's Green, in Roxburghshire, on the 18th of every July; and that his absence from that meeting so soon after entering upon business as a store-farmer, would be considered by his new compeers as highly imprudent and discreditable. "In short," James concludes, "the thing is impossible. But as there is no man in his Majesty's dominions admires his great talents for government, and the energy and dignity of his administration, so much as I do, I will write something at home, and endeavour to give it you before you start." The Shepherd probably expected that these pretty compliments would reach the royal ear; but however that may have been, his own Muse turned a deaf ear to him — at least I never heard of anything that he wrote on this occasion.

Scott embarked without him, on board a new

steam-ship called *the City of Edinburgh*, which, as he suggested to the master, ought rather to have been christened *the New Reekie*. This vessel was that described and lauded in the following letter:—

"*To the Lord Montagu, &c. &c.*

"Edinburgh, July 1, 1821.

"My Dear Lord,

"I write just now to thank you for your letter. I have been on board the steam-ship, and am so delighted with it, that I think I shall put myself aboard for the coronation. It runs at nine knots an hour (*me ipso teste*), against wind and tide, with a deck as long as a frigate's to walk upon, and to sleep on also, if you like, as I have always preferred a cloak and a mattress to these crowded cabins. This reconciles the speed and certainty of the mail-coach with the ease and convenience of being on shipboard. So I really think I will run up to see the grandee show, and run down again. I scorn to mention economy, though the expense is not one-fifth, and that is something in hard times, especially to me, who to choose, would always rather travel in a public conveyance, than with my domestic's good company in a po-chay.

"But now comes the news of news. I have been instigating the great Caledonian Boar, James Hogg, to undertake a similar trip—with the view of turn-

ing an honest penny, to help out his stocking, by writing some sort of Shepherd's Letters, or the like, to put the honest Scots bodies up to this whole affair. I am trying with Lord Sidmouth to get him a place among the newspaper gentry to see the ceremony. It is seriously worth while to get such a popular view of the whole as he will probably hit off.

" I have another view for this poor fellow. You have heard of the Royal Literary Society, and how they propose to distribute solid pudding, *alias* pensions, to men of genius. It is, I think, a very problematical matter, whether it will do the good which is intended; but if they do mean to select worthy objects of encouragement, I really know nobody that has a better or an equal claim to poor Hogg. Our friend Villiers takes a great charge of this matter, and good-naturedly forgave my stating to him a number of objections to the first concoction, which was to have been something resembling the French Academy. It has now been much modified. Perhaps there may be some means fallen upon, with your Lordship's assistance, of placing Hogg under Mr Villiers' view. I would have done so myself, but only I have battled the point against the whole establishment so keenly, that it would be too bad to bring forward a protegé of my own to take advantage of it. They intended at one time to give pensions of about £100 a-year to thirty persons. I know

not where they could find half-a-dozen with such pretensions as the Shepherd's.

"There will be risk of his being lost in London, or kidnapped by some of those ladies who open literary *menageries* for the reception of *lions*. I should like to see him at a rout of blue-stockings. I intend to recommend him to the protection of John Murray the bookseller; and I hope he will come equipped with plaid, kent, and colley.*

"I wish to heaven Lord Melville would either keep the Admiralty, or in Hogg's phrase —

> ——— 'O I would eagerly press him
> The keys of the *east* to require',—

for truly the Board of Control is the Corn Chest for Scotland, where we poor gentry must send our younger sons, as we send our black cattle to the south.—Ever most truly yours,

WALTER SCOTT."

From London, on the day after the coronation, Sir Walter addressed a letter descriptive of the ceremonial to his friend James Ballantyne, who published it in his newspaper. It has been since reprinted — but not in any collection of Scott's own writings; and I therefore insert it here. It will probably pos-

* *Kent* is the shepherd's staff — *Colley* his dog. Scott alludes to the old song of the *Lea Rig* —

> "Nae herds wi' kent and colley there," &c.

sess considerable interest for the student of English history and manners in future times; for the coronation of George the Fourth's successor was conducted on a vastly inferior scale of splendour and expense—and the precedent of curtailment in any such matters is now seldom neglected.

"*To the Editor of the Edinburgh Weekly Journal.*

"London, July 20th, 1821.

"Sir,

"I refer you to the daily papers for the details of the great National Solemnity which we witnessed yesterday, and will hold my promise absolved by sending a few general remarks upon what I saw, with surprise amounting to astonishment, and which I shall never forget. It is, indeed, impossible to conceive a ceremony more august and imposing in all its parts, and more calculated to make the deepest impression both on the eye and on the feelings. The most minute attention must have been bestowed to arrange all the subordinate parts in harmony with the rest; so that, amongst so much antiquated ceremonial, imposing singular dresses, duties, and characters, upon persons accustomed to move in the ordinary routine of society, nothing occurred either awkward or ludicrous which could mar the general effect of the solemnity. Considering that it is but

one step from the sublime to the ridiculous, I own I consider it as surprising that the whole ceremonial of the day should have passed away without the slightest circumstance which could derange the general tone of solemn feeling which was suited to the occasion.

"You must have heard a full account of the only disagreeable event of the day. I mean the attempt of the misguided lady, who has lately furnished so many topics of discussion, to intrude herself upon a ceremonial, where, not being in her proper place, to be present in any other must have been voluntary degradation. That matter is a fire of straw which has now burnt to the very embers, and those who try to blow it into life again, will only blacken their hands and noses, like mischievous children dabbling among the ashes of a bonfire. It seems singular, that being determined to be present at all hazards, this unfortunate personage should not have procured a Peer's ticket, which, I presume, would have insured her admittance. I willingly pass to pleasanter matters.

"The effect of the scene in the Abbey was beyond measure magnificent. Imagine long galleries stretched among the aisles of that venerable and august pile — those which rise above the altar pealing back their echoes to a full and magnificent choir of music — those which occupied the sides filled even to crowding with all that Britain has of beautiful and distin-

guished, and the cross-gallery most appropriately occupied by the Westminster schoolboys, in their white surplices, many of whom might on that day receive impressions never to be lost during the rest of their lives. Imagine this, I say, and then add the spectacle upon the floor—the altar surrounded by the Fathers of the Church—the King encircled by the Nobility of the land and the Counsellors of his throne, and by warriors wearing the honoured marks of distinction bought by many a glorious danger—add to this the rich spectacle of the aisles crowded with waving plumage, and coronets, and caps of honour, and the sun, which brightened and saddened as if on purpose, now beaming in full lustre on the rich and varied assemblage, and now darting a solitary ray, which catched, as it passed, the glittering folds of a banner, or the edge of a group of battle-axes or partizans, and then rested full on some fair form, 'the cynosure of neighbouring eyes,' whose circlet of diamonds glistened under its influence. Imagine all this, and then tell me if I have made my journey of four hundred miles to little purpose. I do not love your *cui bono* men, and therefore I will not be pleased if you ask me in the damping tone of sullen philosophy, what good all this has done the spectators? If we restrict life to its real animal wants and necessities, we shall indeed be satisfied with 'food, clothes, and fire;' but Divine Providence, who widened our sources of enjoyment

beyond those of the animal creation, never meant that we should bound our wishes within such narrow limits; and I shrewdly suspect that those *non est tanti* gentlefolks only depreciate the natural and unaffected pleasure which men like me receive from sights of splendour and sounds of harmony, either because they would seem wiser than their simple neighbours at the expense of being less happy, or because the mere pleasure of the sight and sound is connected with associations of a deeper kind, to which they are unwilling to yield themselves.

"Leaving these gentlemen to enjoy their own wisdom, I still more pity those, if there be any, who (being unable to detect a peg on which to hang a laugh) sneer coldly at this solemn festival, and are rather disposed to dwell on the expense which attends it, than on the generous feelings which it ought to awaken. The expense, so far as it is national, has gone directly and instantly to the encouragement of the British manufacturer and mechanic; and so far as it is personal to the persons of rank attendant upon the Coronation, it operates as a tax upon wealth and consideration for the benefit of poverty and industry; a tax willingly paid by the one class, and not the less acceptable to the other because it adds a happy holiday to the monotony of a life of labour.

"But there were better things to reward my pilgrimage than the mere pleasures of the eye and ear; for it was impossible, without the deepest

veneration, to behold the voluntary and solemn interchange of vows betwixt the King and his assembled People, whilst he, on the one hand, called God Almighty to witness his resolution to maintain their laws and privileges, whilst they called, at the same moment, on the Divine Being, to bear witness that they accepted him for their liege Sovereign, and pledged to him their love and their duty. I cannot describe to you the effect produced by the solemn, yet strange mixture of the words of Scripture, with the shouts and acclamations of the assembled multitude, as they answered to the voice of the Prelate who demanded of them whether they acknowledged as their Monarch the Prince who claimed the sovereignty in their presence. It was peculiarly delightful to see the King receive from the royal brethren, but in particular from the Duke of York, the fraternal kiss in which they acknowledged their sovereign. There was an honest tenderness, an affectionate and sincere reverence in the embrace interchanged betwixt the Duke of York and his Majesty that approached almost to a caress, and impressed all present with the electrical conviction, that the nearest to the throne in blood was the nearest also in affection. I never heard plaudits given more from the heart than those that were thundered upon the royal brethren when they were thus pressed to each other's bosoms, — it was an emotion of natural kindness, which, bursting out amidst ceremonial grandeur, found an

answer in every British bosom. The King seemed much affected at this and one or two other parts of the ceremonial, even so much so as to excite some alarm among those who saw him as nearly as I did. He completely recovered himself, however, and bore (generally speaking) the fatigue of the day very well. I learn from one near his person, that he roused himself with great energy, even when most oppressed with heat and fatigue, when any of the more interesting parts of the ceremony were to be performed, or when anything occurred which excited his personal and immediate attention. When presiding at the banquet amid the long line of his Nobles, he looked 'every inch a King;' and nothing could exceed the grace with which he accepted and returned the various acts of homage rendered to him in the course of that long day.

"It was also a very gratifying spectacle to those who think like me, to behold the Duke of Devonshire and most of the distinguished Whig nobility assembled round the throne on this occasion; giving an open testimony that the differences of political opinions are only skin-deep wounds, which assume at times an angry appearance, but have no real effect on the wholesome constitution of the country.

"If you ask me to distinguish who bore him best, and appeared most to sustain the character we annex to the assistants in such a solemnity, I have no hesitation to name Lord Londonderry, who, in the mag-

nificent robes of the Garter, with the cap and high plume of the order, walked alone, and by his fine face, and majestic person, formed an adequate representative of the order of Edward III., the costume of which was worn by his Lordship only. The Duke of Wellington, with all his laurels, moved and looked deserving the baton, which was never grasped by so worthy a hand. The Marquis of Anglesea showed the most exquisite grace in managing his horse, notwithstanding the want of his limb, which he left at Waterloo. I never saw so fine a bridle-hand in my life, and I am rather a judge of 'noble horsemanship.' Lord Howard's horse was worse bitted than those of the two former noblemen, but not so much so as to derange the ceremony of retiring back out of the Hall.

"The Champion was performed (as of right) by young Dymocke, a fine-looking youth, but bearing, perhaps, a little too much the appearance of a maiden-knight to be the challenger of the world in a King's behalf. He threw down his gauntlet, however, with becoming manhood, and showed as much horsemanship as the crowd of knights and squires around him would permit to be exhibited. His armour was in good taste, but his shield was out of all propriety, being a round *rondache*, or Highland target, a defensive weapon which it would have been impossible to use on horseback, instead of being a three-corner'd, or *heater-shield*, which in time of the tilt was

suspended round the neck. Pardon this antiquarian scruple, which, you may believe, occurred to few but myself. On the whole, this striking part of the exhibition somewhat disappointed me, for I would have had the Champion less embarrassed by his assistants, and at liberty to put his horse on the *grand pas*. And yet the young Lord of Scrivelsbaye looked and behaved extremely well.

"Returning to the subject of costume, I could not but admire what I had previously been disposed much to criticise, — I mean the fancy dress of the Privy-Councillors, which was of white and blue satin, with trunk-hose and mantles, after the fashion of Queen Elizabeth's time. Separately, so gay a garb had an odd effect on the persons of elderly or ill-made men; but when the whole was thrown into one general body, all these discrepancies disappeared, and you no more observed the particular manner or appearance of an individual than you do that of a soldier in the battalion which marches past you. The whole was so completely harmonized in actual colouring, as well as in association with the general mass of gay and gorgeous and antique dress which floated before the eye, that it was next to impossible to attend to the effect of individual figures. Yet a Scotsman will detect a Scotsman amongst the most crowded assemblage, and I must say that the Lord Justice-Clerk of Scotland* showed to as great ad-

* Scott's schoolfellow, the Right Hon. D. Boyle.

vantage in his robes of Privy-Councillor as any by whom that splendid dress was worn on this great occasion. The common Court-dress used by the Privy-Councillors at the last coronation must have had a poor effect in comparison of the present, which formed a gradation in the scale of gorgeous ornament, from the unwieldy splendour of the heralds, who glowed like huge masses of cloth of gold and silver, to the more chastened robes and ermine of the Peers. I must not forget the effect produced by the Peers placing their coronets on their heads, which was really august.

"The box assigned to the foreign Ambassadors presented a most brilliant effect, and was perfectly in a blaze with diamonds. When the sunshine lighted on Prince Esterhazy, in particular, he glimmered like a galaxy. I cannot learn positively if he had on that renowned coat which has visited all the courts of Europe save ours, and is said to be worth £100,000, or some such trifle, and which costs the Prince £100 or two every time he puts it on, as he is sure to lose pearls to that amount. This was a hussar dress, but splendid in the last degree; perhaps too fine for good taste—at least it would have appeared so anywhere else. Beside the Prince sat a good-humoured lass, who seemed all eyes and ears (his daughter-in-law I believe), who wore as many diamonds as if they had been Bristol stones. An honest Persian was also a remarkable figure, from the dogged and im-

perturbable gravity with which he looked on the whole scene, without ever moving a limb or a muscle during the space of four hours. Like Sir Wilful Witwoud, I cannot find that your Persian is orthodox; for if he scorned everything else, there was a a Mahometan paradise extended on his right hand along the seats which were occupied by the peeresses and their daughters, which the Prophet himself might have looked on with emotion. I have seldom seen so many elegant and beautiful girls as sat mingled among the noble matronage of the land; and the waving plumage of feathers, which made the universal head-dress, had the most appropriate effect in setting off their charms.

"I must not omit that the foreigners, who are apt to consider us as a nation *en frac*, and without the usual ceremonials of dress and distinction, were utterly astonished and delighted to see the revival of feudal dresses and feudal grandeur when the occasion demanded it, and that in a degree of splendour which they averred they had never seen paralleled in Europe.

"The duties of service at the Banquet, and of attendance in general, was performed by pages drest very elegantly in Henri Quatre coats of scarlet, with gold lace, blue sashes, white silk hose, and white rosettes. There were also marshal's-men for keeping order, who wore a similar dress, but of blue, and having white sashes. 'Both departments were filled

up almost entirely by young gentlemen, many of them of the very first condition, who took these menial characters to gain admission to the show. When I saw many of my young acquaintance thus attending upon their fathers and kinsmen, the Peers, Knights, and so forth, I could not help thinking of Crabbe's lines, with a little alteration:—

> 'Twas schooling pride to see the menial wait,
> Smile on his father, and receive his plate.

It must be owned, however, that they proved but indifferent valets, and were very apt, like the clown in the pantomime, to eat the cheer they should have handed to their masters, and to play other *tours de page*, which reminded me of the caution of our proverb 'not to man yourself with your kin.' The Peers, for example, had only a cold collation, while the Aldermen of London feasted on venison and turtle; and similar errors necessarily befell others in the confusion of the evening. But these slight mistakes, which indeed were not known till afterwards, had not the slightest effect on the general grandeur of the scene.

"I did not see the procession between the Abbey and Hall. In the morning a few voices called *Queen! Queen!* as Lord Londonderry passed, and even when the Sovereign appeared. But these were only signals for the loud and reiterated acclamations in which these tones of discontent were completely drowned. In the return, no one dissonant voice intimated the

least dissent from the shouts of gratulation which poured from every quarter; and certainly never Monarch received a more general welcome from his assembled subjects.

"You will have from others full accounts of the variety of entertainments provided for John Bull in the Parks, the River, in the Theatres, and elsewhere. Nothing was to be seen or heard but sounds of pleasure and festivity; and whoever saw the scene at any one spot, was convinced that the whole population was assembled there, while others found a similar concourse of revellers in every different point. It is computed that about FIVE HUNDRED THOUSAND PEOPLE shared in the Festival in one way or another; and you may imagine the excellent disposition by which the people were animated, when I tell you, that, excepting a few windows broken by a small body-guard of ragamuffins, who were in immediate attendance on the Great Lady in the morning, not the slightest political violence occurred to disturb the general harmony—and that the assembled populace seemed to be universally actuated by the spirit of the day—loyalty, namely, and good-humour. Nothing occurred to damp those happy dispositions; the weather was most propitious, and the arrangements so perfect, that no accident of any kind is reported as having taken place.—And so concluded the coronation of GEORGE IV., whom GOD long preserve. Those who witnessed it have seen a scene calculated

to raise the country in their opinion, and to throw into the shade all scenes of similar magnificence, from the Field of the Cloth of Gold down to the present day.

I remain, your obedient servant,

AN EYE-WITNESS."

At the close of this brilliant scene, Scott received a mark of homage to his genius which delighted him not less than Laird Nippy's reverence for *the Sheriff's Knoll*, and the Sheffield cutler's dear acquisition of his signature on a visiting ticket. Missing his carriage, he had to return home on foot from Westminster, after the banquet—that is to say, between two or three o'clock in the morning;—when he and a young gentleman his companion found themselves locked in the crowd, somewhere near Whitehall, and the bustle and tumult were such that his friend was afraid some accident might happen to the lame limb. A space for the dignitaries was kept clear at that point by the Scots Greys. Sir Walter addressed a serjeant of this celebrated regiment, begging to be allowed to pass by him into the open ground in the middle of the street. The man answered shortly that his orders were strict—that the thing was impossible. While he was endeavouring to persuade the serjeant to relent, some new wave of turbulence approached from behind, and his young companion exclaimed in a loud voice, "Take care, Sir Walter

Scott, take care!" The stalwart dragoon, on hearing the name, said, "What! Sir Walter Scott? He shall get through anyhow!" He then addressed the soldiers near him—"Make room, men, for Sir Walter Scott, our illustrious countryman!" The men answered, "Sir Walter Scott!—God bless him!"—and he was in a moment within the guarded line of safety.

I shall now take another extract from the *memoranda*, with which I have been favoured by my friend Allan Cunningham. After the particulars formerly quoted about Scott's sitting to Chantrey in the spring of 1820, he proceeds as follows:—

"I saw Sir Walter again, when he attended the coronation, in 1821. In the meantime his bust had been wrought in marble, and the sculptor desired to take the advantage of his visit to communicate such touches of expression or lineament as the new material rendered necessary. This was done with a happiness of eye and hand almost magical: for five hours did the poet sit, or stand, or walk, while Chantrey's chisel was passed again and again over the marble, adding something at every touch.

"'Well, Allan,' he said, when he saw me at this last sitting, 'were you at the coronation? it was a splendid sight.' 'No, Sir Walter,' I answered,—'places were dear and ill to get: I am told it was a

magnificent scene: but having seen the procession of King Crispin at Dumfries, I was satisfied.' I said this with a smile: Scott took it as I meant it, and laughed heartily. 'That's not a bit better than Hogg,' he said. 'He stood balancing the matter whether to go to the coronation or the fair of Saint Boswell—and the fair carried it.'

"During this conversation, Mr Bolton the engineer came in. Something like a cold acknowledgment passed between the poet and him. On his passing into an inner room, Scott said, 'I am afraid Mr Bolton has not forgot a little passage that once took place between us. We met in a public company, and in reply to the remark of some one, he said, "That's like the old saying,—in every corner of the world you will find a Scot, a rat, and a Newcastle grindstone." This touched my Scotch spirit, and I said, "Mr Bolton, you should have added—*and a Brummagem button.*" There was a laugh at this, and Mr Bolton replied, "We make something better in Birmingham than buttons—we make steam-engines, sir."

"'I like Bolton,' thus continued Sir Walter; 'he is a brave man, and who can dislike the brave?—He showed this on a remarkable occasion. He had engaged to coin for some foreign prince a large quantity of gold. This was found out by some desperadoes, who resolved to rob the premises, and as a preliminary step tried to bribe the porter. The porter

was an honest fellow,—he told Bolton that he was offered a hundred pounds to be blind and deaf next night. Take the money, was the answer, and I shall protect the place. Midnight came—the gates opened as if by magic—the interior doors, secured with patent locks, opened as of their own accord—and three men with dark lanterns entered and went straight to the gold. Bolton had prepared some flax steeped in turpentine—he dropt fire upon it, a sudden light filled all the place, and with his assistants he rushed forward on the robbers,—the leader saw in a moment he was betrayed, turned on the porter, and shooting him dead, burst through all obstruction, and with an ingot of gold in his hand, scaled the wall and escaped.'

"'That is quite a romance in robbing,' I said, and I had nearly said more, for the cavern scene and death of Meg Merrilees rose in my mind,—perhaps the mind of Sir Walter was taking the direction of the Solway too, for he said, 'How long have you been from Nithsdale?' 'A dozen years.' 'Then you will remember it well. I was a visiter there in my youth; my brother was at Closeburn school, and there I found Creehope Linn, a scene ever present to my fancy. It is at once fearful and beautiful. The stream jumps down from the moorlands, saws its way into the free-stone rock of a hundred feet deep, and, in escaping to the plain, performs a thousand vagaries. In one part it has actually shaped out a little chapel,—the peasants call it the Sutors

Chair. There are sculptures on the sides of the linn too, not such as Mr Chantrey casts, but etchings scraped in with a knife perhaps, or a harrow-tooth. —Did you ever hear,' said Sir Walter, 'of Patrick Maxwell, who, taken prisoner by the King's troops, escaped from them on his way to Edinburgh, by flinging himself into that dreadful linn on Moffat water, called the Douglasses Beef-tub?'—'Frequently,' I answered; 'the country abounds with anecdotes of those days; the popular feeling sympathizes with the poor Jacobites, and has recorded its sentiments in many a tale and many a verse.'—'The Ettrick Shepherd has collected not a few of those things,' said Scott, 'and I suppose many snatches of song may yet be found.' —*C.* 'I have gathered many such things myself, Sir Walter, and as I still propose to make a collection of all Scottish songs of poetic merit, I shall work up many of my stray verses and curious anecdotes in the notes.'—*S.* 'I am glad that you are about such a thing; any help which I can give you, you may command; ask me any questions, no matter how many, I shall answer them if I can. Don't be timid in your selection; our ancestors fought boldly, spoke boldly, and sang boldly too. I can help you to an old characteristic ditty not yet in print:—

'There dwalt a man into the wast,
And O gin he was cruel,
For on his bridal night at e'en
He gat up and grat for gruel.

They brought to him a gude sheep's head,
A bason, and a towel;
Gar take thae whim-whams far frae me,
I winna want my gruel.'

"*C.*—'I never heard that verse before; the hero seems related to the bridegroom of Nithsdale—

'The bridegroom grat as the sun gade down,
The bridegroom grat as the sun gade down;
To ony man I'll gie a hunder marks sae free,
This night that will bed wi' a bride for me.'

"*S.*—'A cowardly loon enough. I know of many crumbs and fragments of verse which will be useful to your work; the Border was once peopled with poets, for every one that could fight could make ballads, some of them of great power and pathos. Some such people as the minstrels were living less than a century ago.'—*C.* 'I knew a man, the last of a race of district tale-tellers, who used to boast of the golden days of his youth, and say, that the world, with all its knowledge, was grown sixpence a-day worse for him.'—*S.* 'How was that? how did he make his living? by telling tales, or singing ballads?'—*C.* 'By both: he had a devout tale for the old, and a merry song for the young; he was a sort of beggar.'—*S.* 'Out upon thee, Allan—dost thou call that begging? Why, man, we make our bread by story-telling, and honest bread it is.'"

I ought not to close this extract, without observing that Sir F. Chantrey presented the original bust, of which Mr Cunningham speaks, to Sir Walter himself; by whose remotest descendants it will undoubtedly be held in additional honour on that account. The poet had the further gratification of learning that three copies were executed in marble before the original quitted the studio: One for Windsor Castle — a second for Apsley House — and a third for the friendly sculptor's own private collection. The casts of this bust have since been multiplied beyond perhaps any example whatever.

Sir Walter returned to Scotland in company with his friend William Stewart Rose; and they took the way by Stratford-upon-Avon, where, on the wall of the room in which Shakspeare is supposed to have been born, the autograph of these pilgrims may still, I believe, be traced

CHAPTER LIII.

Publication of Mr Adolphus's Letters on the Authorship of Waverley.

1821.

During Scott's visit to London in July 1821, there appeared a work which was read with eager curiosity and delight by the public—with much private diversion besides by his friends—and which he himself must have gone through with a very odd mixture of emotions. I allude to the volume entitled "Letters to Richard Heber, Esq., containing critical remarks on the series of novels beginning with Waverley, and an attempt to ascertain their author;" which was soon known to have been penned by Mr John Leycester Adolphus, a distinguished alumnus of the University then represented in Parliament by Sir Walter's early friend Heber. Previously to the publication of these Letters, the opinion that Scott was the author of Waverley had indeed become well

settled in the English, to say nothing of the Scottish mind; a great variety of circumstances, external as well as internal, had by degrees co-operated to its general establishment: yet there were not wanting persons who still dissented, or at least affected to dissent from it. It was reserved for the enthusiastic industry, and admirable ingenuity of this juvenile academic, to set the question at rest by an accumulation of critical evidence which no sophistry could evade, and yet produced in a style of such high-bred delicacy, that it was impossible for the hitherto 'veiled prophet' to take the slightest offence with the hand that had for ever abolished his disguise. The only sceptical scruple that survived this exposition, was extinguished in due time by Scott's avowal of the *sole and unassisted* authorship of his novels; and now Mr Adolphus's Letters have shared the fate of other elaborate arguments, the thesis of which has ceased to be controverted. Hereafter, I am persuaded, his volume will be revived for its own sake; — but, in the meantime, regarding it merely as forming, by its original effect, an epoch in Scott's history, I think it my duty to mark my sense of its importance in that point of view, by transcribing the writer's own summary of its

"CONTENTS.

"LETTER I.—Introduction—General reasons for believing the novels to have been written by the author of Marmion.

"LETTER II.—Resemblance between the novelist and poet

in their tastes, studies, and habits of life, as illustrated by their works — Both Scotchmen — Habitual residents in Edinburgh — Poets — Antiquaries — German and Spanish scholars — Equal in classical attainment — Deeply read in British history — Lawyers — Fond of field sports — Of dogs — Acquainted with most manly exercises — Lovers of military subjects — The novelist apparently not a soldier.

"LETTER III. — The novelist is, like the poet, a man of good society — His stories never betray forgetfulness of honourable principles, or ignorance of good manners — Spirited pictures of gentlemanly character — Colonel Mannering — Judicious treatment of elevated historical personages. — The novelist quotes and praises most contemporary poets, except the author of Marmion — Instances in which the poet has appeared to slight his own unacknowledged, but afterwards avowed productions.

"LETTER IV. — Comparison of the works themselves — All distinguished by good morals and good sense — The latter particularly shown in the management of character — Prose style — its general features — Plainness and facility — Grave banter — Manner of telling a short story — Negligence — Scotticisms — Great propriety and correctness occasionally, and sometimes unusual sweetness.

"LETTER V. — Dialogue in the novels and poems — Neat colloquial turns in the former, such as cannot be expected in romantic poetry — Happy adaptation of dialogue to character, whether merely natural, or artificially modified, as by profession, local habits, &c. — Faults of dialogue, as connected with character of speakers — Quaintness of language and thought — Bookish air in conversation — Historical personages alluding to their own celebrated acts and sayings — Unsuccessful attempts at broad vulgarity — Beauties of composition peculiar to the dialogue — Terseness and spirit — These qualities well displayed in quarrels; but not in scenes of polished raillery — Eloquence.

"LETTER VI. — The poetry of the author of Marmion generally characterised — His habits of composition and turn of mind

as a poet, compared with those of the novelist — Their descriptions simply conceived and composed, without abstruse and far-fetched circumstances or refined comments — Great advantage derived by both from accidental combinations of images, and the association of objects in the mind with persons, events, &c.— Distinctness and liveliness of effect in narrative and description— Narrative usually picturesque or dramatic, or both—Distinctness, &c. of effect, produced in various ways—Striking pictures of individuals—Their persons, dress, &c.—Descriptions sometimes too obviously picturesque — Subjects for painters — Effects of light frequently noticed and finely described — Both writers excel in grand and complicated scenes — Among detached and occasional ornaments, the similes particularly noticed—Their frequency and beauty — Similes and metaphors sometimes quaint, and pursued too far.

"LETTER VII.—Stories of the two writers compared—These are generally connected with true history, and have their scene laid in a real place — Local peculiarities diligently attended to — Instances in which the novelist and poet have celebrated the same places—they frequently describe these as seen by a traveller (the hero or some other principal personage) for the first time — Dramatic mode of relating story—Soliloquies—Some scenes degenerate into melodrame — Lyrical pieces introduced sometimes too theatrically —Comparative unimportance of heroes—Various causes of this fault — Heroes rejected by ladies, and marrying others whom they had before slighted —Personal struggle between a civilized and a barbarous hero — Characters resembling each other—Female portraits in general—Fathers and daughters — Characters in Paul's Letters — Wycliffe and Risingham — Glossin and Hatteraick — Other characters compared — Long periods of time abruptly passed over — Surprises, unexpected discoveries, &c. — These sometimes too forced and artificial — Frequent recourse to the marvellous — Dreams well described — Living persons mistaken for spectres—Deaths of Burley Risingham, and Rashleigh.

"LETTER VIII. — Comparison of particular passages — Descriptions — Miscellaneous thoughts — Instances in which the two writers have resorted to the same sources of information, and borrowed the same incidents, &c. — Same authors quoted by both — the poet, like the novelist, fond of mentioning his contemporaries, whether as private friends or as men publicly distinguished — Author of Marmion never notices the Author of Waverley (see Letter III.) — Both delight in frequently introducing an antiquated or fantastic dialect — Peculiarities of expression common to both writers — Conclusion."

I wish I had space for extracting copious specimens of the felicity with which Mr Adolphus works out these various points of his problem. As it is, I must be contented with a narrow selection — and I shall take two or three of the passages which seem to me to connect themselves most naturally with the main purpose of my own compilation.

"A thorough knowledge and statesmanlike understanding of the domestic history and politics of Britain at various and distant periods; a familiar acquaintance with the manners and prevailing spirit of former generations, and with the characters and habits of their most distinguished men, are of themselves no cheap or common attainments; and it is rare indeed to find them united with a strong original genius, and great brilliancy of imagination. I know, however, that the towering poet of Flodden-field is also the diligent editor of Swift and Dryden, of Lord Somers's Tracts and of Sir Ralph Sadler's State Papers; that in these and other parts of his literary career he has necessarily plunged deep into the study of British history, biography, and antiquities, and that the talent and activity which he brought to these researches has been warmly seconded by the zeal and liberality of those who possessed the amplest and rarest sources of information. 'The

muse found him,' as he himself said long ago, 'engaged in the pursuit of historical and traditional antiquities, and the excursions which he has made in her company have been of a nature which increases his attachment to his original study.' Are we then to suppose, that another writer has combined the same powers of fancy with the same spirit of investigation, the same perseverance, and the same good fortune? and shall we not rather believe, that the labour employed in the illustration of Dryden has helped to fertilize the invention which produced Montrose and Old Mortality? . . . . .

"However it may militate against the supposition of his being a poet, I cannot suppress my opinion, that our novelist is a 'man of law.' He deals out the peculiar terms and phrases of that science (as practised in Scotland) with a freedom and confidence beyond the reach of any uninitiated person. If ever, in the progress of his narrative, a legal topic presents itself (which very frequently happens), he neither declines the subject, nor timidly passes it over, but enters as largely and formally into all its technical nalities, as if the case were actually 'before the fifteen.' The tion. rs, humours, and professional *bavardage* of lawyers are with all the ease and familiarity which result from hanlike understa ervation. In fact, the subject of law, which is a stumin at various and to others, is to the present writer a spot of repose; manners and preva heme he lounges and gossips, he is *discinctus et so*haracters and habits at times, almost forgets that when an author finds lves no cheap or com ome and perfectly at ease, he is in great danger of find them united with.—If, then, my inferences are correct, the unknown of imagination. We as just now proved to be an excellent poet, must Flodden-field is also ounced a follower of the law: the combination is so ord Somers's Tracts, east on this side of the Tweed, that, as Juvenal says in these and other occasion—

plunged deep into
tiquities, and that
e researches have
ity of those who
rmation.

> ——————— 'bimembri
> Ioc monstrum puero, vel mirandis sub aratro
> Piscibus inventis, et fœtæ comparo mulæ.'

as indeed presented us with one such prodigy in the

author of Marmion; and it is probable, that in the author of Waverley, we only see the same specimen under a different aspect; for, however sportive the goddess may be, she has too much wit and invention to wear out a frolic by many repetitions. . . . . .

" A striking characteristic of both writers is their ardent love of rural sports, and all manly and robust exercises. — But the importance given to the canine race in these works ought to be noted as a characteristic feature by itself. I have seen some drawings by a Swiss artist, who was called the Raphael of cats; and either of the writers before us might, by a similar phrase, be called the Wilkie of dogs. Is it necessary to justify such a compliment by examples? Call Yarrow, or Lufra, or poor Fangs, Colonel Mannering's Plato, Henry Morton's Elphin, or Hobbie Elliot's Kilbuck, or Wolfe of Avenel Castle: — see Fitz-James's hounds returning from the pursuit of the lost stag —

> ' Back limped with slow and crippled pace
> The sulky leaders of the chase ' ——

or swimming after the boat which carries their Master —

> ' With heads erect and whimpering cry
> The hounds behind their passage ply.'

See Captain Clutterbuck's dog *quizzing* him when he missed a bird, or the scene of ' mutual explanation and remonstrance ' between ' the venerable patriarchs old Pepper and Mustard,' and Henry Bertram's rough terrier Wasp. If these instances are not sufficient, turn to the English blood-hound assailing the young Buccleuch —

> ' And hark ! and hark ! the deep-mouthed bark
> Comes nigher still and nigher ;
> Bursts on the path a dark blood-hound,
> His tawny muzzle tracked the ground,
> And his red eye shot fire.
> Soon as the wildered child saw he,
> He flew at him right furiousIle. . . . .
> I ween you would have seen with joy
> The bearing of the gallant boy. . . . . .

So fierce he struck, the dog, afraid,
At cautious distance hoarsely bayed,
But still in act to spring.'

Or Lord Ronald's deer-hounds, in the haunted forest of Glenfinlas —

'Within an hour return'd each hound;
In rush'd the rousers of the deer;
They howl'd in melancholy sound,
Then closely couch beside the seer. . . . . .
Sudden the hounds erect their ears,
And sudden cease their moaning howl;
Close press'd to Moy, they mark their fears
By shivering limbs, and stifled growl.
Untouch'd the harp began to ring,
As softly, slowly, oped the door,' &c.

Or look at Cedric the Saxon, in his antique hall, attended by his greyhounds and slowhounds, and the terriers which 'waited with impatience the arrival of the supper; but with the sagacious knowledge of physiognomy peculiar to their race, forbore to intrude upon the moody silence of their master.' To complete the picture, 'One grisly old wolf-dog alone, with the liberty of an indulged favourite, had planted himself close by the chair of state, and occasionally ventured to solicit notice by putting his large hairy head upon his master's knee, or pushing his nose into his hand. Even he was repelled by the stern command, "Down, Balder, down! I am not in the humour for foolery."'

"Another animated sketch occurs in the way of simile. — 'The interview between Ratcliffe and Sharpitlaw had an aspect different from all these. They sate for five minutes silent, on opposite sides of a small table, and looked fixedly at each other, with a sharp, knowing, and alert cast of countenance, not unmingled with an inclination to laugh, and resembled, more than anything else, two dogs, who, preparing for a game at romps, are seen to couch down, and remain in that posture for a little time, watching each other's movements, and waiting which shall begin the game.'

"Let me point out a still more amusing study of canine life: 'While the Antiquary was in full declamation, June, who held

him in awe, according to the remarkable instinct by which dogs instantly discover those who like or dislike them, had peeped several times into the room, and, encountering nothing very forbidding in his aspect, had at length presumed to introduce her full person, and finally, becoming bold by impunity, she actually ate up Mr Oldbuck's toast, as, looking first at one, then at another of his audience, he repeated with self-complacence —

" Weave the warp, and weave the woof,"—

" You remember the passage in the Fatal Sisters, which, by the way, is not so fine as in the original — But, hey-day! my toast has vanished! I see which way — Ah, thou type of womankind, no wonder they take offence at thy generic appellation!"— (So saying, he shook his fist at Juno, who scoured out of the parlour.)

" In short, throughout these works, wherever it is possible for a dog to contribute in any way to the effect of a scene, we find there the very dog that was required, in his proper place and attitude. In Branksome Hall, when the feast was over —

' The stag-hounds, weary with the chase,
Lay stretched upon the rushy floor,
And urged, in dreams, the forest race
From Teviot-stone to Eskdale-moor.'

The gentle Margaret, when she steals secretly from the castle,

' Pats the shaggy blood-hound
As he rouses him up from his lair.'

When Waverley visits the Baron of Bradwardine, in his concealment at Janet Gellatly's, Ban and Buscar play their parts in every point with perfect discretion; and in the joyous company that assembles at Little Veolan, on the Baron's enlargement, these honest animals are found ' stuffed to the throat with food, in the liberality of Macwheeble's joy,' and ' snoring on the floor.' In the perilous adventure of Henry Bertram, at Portanferry gaol, the action would lose half its interest, without the by-play of

little Wasp. At the funeral ceremony of Duncraggan (in the Lady of the Lake), a principal mourner is

> —— 'Stumah, who, the bier beside,
> His master's corpse with wonder eyed;
> Poor Stumah! whom his least halloo
> Could send like lightning o'er the dew.'

Ellen Douglas smiled (or did not smile)

> —— 'to see the stately drake,
> Lead forth his fleet upon the lake,
> While her vexed spaniel from the beach,
> Bayed at the prize beyond his reach.'

"I will close this growing catalogue of examples with one of the most elegant descriptions that ever sprang from a poet's fancy:—

> 'Delightful praise! like summer rose,
> That brighter in the dew-drop glows,
> The bashful maiden's cheek appeared,
> For Douglas spoke, and Malcolm heard.
> The flush of shame-faced joy to hide,
> The hounds, the hawk, her cares divide;
> The loved caresses of the maid
> The dogs with crouch and whimper paid;
> And, at her whistle, on her hand,
> The falcon took his favourite stand,
> Closed his dark wing, relaxed his eye,
> Nor, though unhooded, sought to fly.'
> * * * * *

"Their passion for martial subjects, and their success in treating them, form a conspicuous point of resemblance between the novelist and poet. No writer has appeared in our age (and few have ever existed) who could vie with the author of Marmion in describing battles and marches, and all the terrible grandeur of war, except the author of Waverley. Nor is there any man of original genius and powerful inventive talent as conversant with the military character, and as well schooled in tactics as the author of Waverley, except the author of Marmion. Both seem to exult in camps, and to warm at the approach of a soldier. In every warlike scene that awes and agitates, or dazzles and inspires, the poet triumphs; but where any effect is to be produced by dwelling on the minutiæ of military habits and discipline, or ex-

hibiting the blended hues of individual humour and professional peculiarity, as they present themselves in the mess-room or the guard-room, every advantage is on the side of the novelist. I might illustrate this position by tracing all the gradations of character marked out in the novels, from the Baron of Bradwardine to Tom Halliday: but the examples are too well known to require enumeration, and too generally admired to stand in need of panegyric. Both writers, then, must have bestowed a greater attention on military subjects, and have mixed more frequently in the society of soldiers, than is usual with persons not educated to the profession of arms.

"It may be asked why we should take for granted that the writer of these novels is not himself a member of the military profession? The conjecture is a little improbable if we have been right in concluding that the minuteness and multiplicity of our author's legal details are the fruit of his own study and practice; although the same person may certainly, at different periods of life, put on the helmet and the wig, the gorget and the band; attend courts and lie in trenches; head a charge and lead a cause. I cannot help suspecting, however (it is with the greatest diffidence I venture the remark), that in those warlike recitals which so strongly interest the great body of readers, an army critic would discover several particulars that savour more of the amateur than of the practised campaigner. It is not from any technical improprieties (if such exist) that I derive this observation, but, on the contrary, from a too great minuteness and over-curious diligence, at times perceptible in the military details; which, amidst a seeming fluency and familiarity, betray, I think, here and there, the lurking vestiges of labour and contrivance, like the marks of pickaxes in an artificial grotto. The accounts of operations in the field, if not more circumstantial than a professional author would have made them, are occasionally circumstantial on points which such an author would have thought it idle to dwell upon. A writer who derived his knowledge of war from experience would, no doubt, like the Author of Waverley, delight in

shaping out imaginary manœuvres, or in filling up the traditional outline of those martial enterprises and conflicts, which have found a place in history; perhaps, too, he would dwell on these parts of his narrative a little longer than was strictly necessary; but in describing (for example) the advance of a party of soldiers, threatened by an ambuscade, he would scarcely think it worth while to relate at large that the captain 're-formed his line of march, commanded his soldiers to unsling their firelocks and fix their bayonets, and formed an advanced and rear-guard, each consisting of a non-commissioned officer and two privates, who received strict orders to keep an alert look-out:' or that when the enemy appeared, 'he ordered the rear-guard to join the centre, and both to close up to the advance, doubling his files, so as to occupy with his column the whole practicable part of the road,' &c. Again, in representing a defeated corps retiring and pressed by the enemy, he would probably never think of recording (as our novelist does in his incomparable narrative of the engagement at Drumclog) that the commanding officer gave such directions as these — 'Let Allan form the regiment, and do you two retreat up the hill in two bodies, each halting alternately as the other falls back. I'll keep the rogues in check with the rear-guard, making a stand and facing from time to time.' I do not offer these observations for the purpose of depreciating a series of military pictures, which have never been surpassed in richness, animation, and distinctness; I will own, too, that such details as I have pointed out are the fittest that could be selected for the generality of novel readers; I merely contend that a writer practically acquainted with war would either have passed over these circumstances as too common to require particular mention, or if he had thought it necessary to enlarge upon these, would have dwelt with proportionate minuteness on incidents of a less ordinary kind, which the recollections of a soldier would have readily supplied, and his imagination would have rested on with complacency. He would, in short, have left as little undone for the military, as the present author has for the legal part of his narra-

tives. But the most ingenious writer who attempts to discourse with technical familiarity on arts or pursuits with which he is not habitually conversant, will too surely fall into a superfluous particularity on common and trivial points, proportioned to his deficiency in those nicer details which imply practical knowledge." . . . . . .

'The prince of darkness is a gentleman.' *

"Another point of resemblance between the author of Waverley and him of Flodden Field is, that both are unquestionably men of good society. Of the anonymous writer I infer this from his works; of the poet it is unnecessary to deduce such a character from his writings, because they are not anonymous. I am the more inclined to dwell upon this merit in the novelist, on account of its rarity; for among the whole multitude of authors, well or ill educated, who devote themselves to poetry or to narrative or dramatic fiction, how few there are who give any proof in their works, of the refined taste, the instinctive sense of propriety, the clear spirit of honour, nay, of the familiar acquaintance with conventional forms of good-breeding, which are essential to the character of a gentleman! Even of the small number who, in a certain degree, possess these qualifications, how rarely do we find one who can so conduct his fable, and so order his dialogue throughout, that nothing shall be found either repugnant to honourable feelings or inconsistent with polished manners! How constantly, even in the best works of fiction, are we disgusted with such offences against all generous principle, as the reading of letters by those for whom they were not intended; taking advantage of accidents to overhear private conversation; revealing what in honour should have remained secret; plotting against men as enemies, and at the same time making use of their services; dishonest practices on the passions or sensibilities of women by their admirers; falsehoods, not always indirect; and an endless

* *King Lear, Act. III. Scene 4.*

variety of low artifices, which appear to be thought quite legitimate if carried on through subordinate agents. And all these knaveries are assigned to characters which the reader is expected to honour with his sympathy, or at least to receive into favour before the story concludes.

"The sins against propriety in manners are as frequent and as glaring. I do not speak of the hoyden vivacity, harlot tenderness, and dancing-school affability, with which vulgar novel-writers always deck out their countesses and principessas, chevaliers, dukes, and marquises; but it would be easy to produce, from authors of a better class, abundant instances of bookish and laborious pleasantry, of pert and insipid gossip or mere slang, the wrecks, perhaps, of an obsolete fashionable dialect, set down as the brilliant conversation of a witty and elegant society: incredible outrages on the common decorum of life, represented as traits of eccentric humour; familiar raillery pushed to downright rudeness; affectation or ill-breeding over-coloured so as to become insupportable insolence; extravagant rants on the most delicate topics indulged in before all the world; expressions freely interchanged between gentlemen, which, by the customs of that class, are neither used nor tolerated; and quarrels carried on most bombastically and abusively, even to mortal defiance, without a thought bestowed upon the numbers, sex, nerves, or discretion of the bystanders.

"You will perceive that in recapitulating the offences of other writers, I have pronounced an indirect eulogium on the Author of Waverley. No man, I think, has a clearer view of what is just and honourable in principle and conduct, or possesses in a higher degree that elegant taste, and that chivalrous generosity of feeling, which, united with exact judgment, give an author the power of comprehending and expressing, not merely the right and fit, but the graceful and exalted in human action. As an illustration of these remarks, a somewhat homely one perhaps, let me call to your recollection the incident, so wild and extravagant in itself, of Sir Piercie Shafton's elopement with the miller's daugh-

ter. In the address and feeling with which the author has displayed the high-minded delicacy of Queen Elizabeth's courtier to the unguarded village nymph, in his brief reflections arising out of this part of the narrative, and indeed in his whole conception and management of the adventure, I do not know whether the moralist or the gentleman is most to be admired: it is impossible to praise too warmly either the sound taste, or the virtuous sentiment which have imparted so much grace and interest to such a hazardous episode.

"It may, I think, be generally affirmed, on a review of all the six-and-thirty volumes, in which this author has related the adventures of some twenty or more heroes and heroines (without counting second-rate personages), that there is not an unhandsome action or degrading sentiment recorded of any person who is recommended to the full esteem of the reader. To be blameless on this head is one of the strongest proofs a writer can give of honourable principles implanted by education and refreshed by good society.

"The correctness in morals is scarcely more remarkable than the refinement and propriety in manners, by which these novels are distinguished. Where the character of a gentlemen is introduced, we generally find it supported without affectation or constraint, and often with so much truth, animation, and dignity, that we forget ourselves into a longing to behold and converse with the accomplished creature of imagination. It is true that the volatile and elegant man of wit and pleasure, and the gracefully fantastic petite-maitresse, are a species of character scarcely ever attempted, and even the few sketches we meet with in this style are not worthy of so great a master. But the aristocratic country gentleman, the ancient lady of quality, the gallant cavalier, the punctilious young soldier, and the jocund veteran, whose high mind is mellowed, not subdued by years, are drawn with matchless vigour, grace, and refinement. There is, in all these creations, a spirit of gentility, not merely of that negative kind which avoids giving offence, but of a strong, commanding, and

pervading quality, blending unimpaired with the richest humour and wildest eccentricity, and communicating an interest and an air of originality to characters which, without it, would be wearisome and insipid, or would fade into commonplace. In Waverley, for example, if it were not for this powerful charm, the severe but warm-hearted Major Melville and the generous Colonel Talbot would become mere ordinary machines for carrying on the plot, and Sir Everard, the hero of an episode that might be coveted by Mackenzie, would encounter the frowns of every impatient reader, for unprofitably retarding the story at its outset.

"But without dwelling on minor instances, I will refer you at once to the character of Colonel Mannering, as one of the most striking representations I am acquainted with, of a gentleman in feelings and in manners, in habits, taste, predilections; nay, if the expression may be ventured, a gentleman even in prejudices, passions, and caprices. Had it been less than all I have described; had any refinement, any nicety of touch been wanting, the whole portrait must have been coarse, common, and repulsive, hardly distinguishable from the moody father and domineering chieftain of every hackneyed romance-writer. But it was no vulgar hand that drew the lineaments of Colonel Mannering: no ordinary mind could have conceived that exquisite combination of sternness and sensibility, injurious haughtiness and chivalrous courtesy; the promptitude, decision, and imperious spirit of a military disciplinarian; the romantic caprices of an untameable enthusiast; generosity impatient of limit or impediment; pride scourged but not subdued by remorse; and a cherished philosophical severity, maintaining ineffectual conflicts with native tenderness and constitutional irritability. Supposing that it had entered into the thoughts of an inferior writer to describe a temper of mind at once impetuous, kind, arrogant, affectionate, stern, sensitive, deliberate, fanciful; supposing even that he had had the skill to combine these different qualities harmoniously and naturally, yet how could he have attained the Shaksperian felicity of those delicate and unambitious touches, by which this author shapes

and chisels out individual character from general nature, and imparts a distinct personality to the creature of his invention? Such are (for example) the slight tinge of superstition, contracted by the romantic young Astrologer in his adventure at Ellangowan, not wholly effaced in maturer life, and extending itself by contagion to the mind of his daughter," &c. &c.

—It would have gratified Mr Adolphus could he have known when he penned these pages a circumstance which the reperusal of them brings to my memory. When Guy Mannering was first published, the Ettrick Shepherd said to Professor Wilson, "I have done wi' doubts now. Colonel Mannering is just Walter Scott, painted by himself." This was repeated to James Ballantyne, and he again mentioned it to Scott—who smiled in approbation of the Shepherd's shrewdness, and often afterwards, when the printer expressed an opinion in which he could not concur, would cut him short with—"James—James—you'll find that Colonel Mannering has laid down the law on this point."——I resume my extract—

"All the productions I am acquainted with, both of the poet and of the prose writer, recommend themselves by a native piety and goodness, not generally predominant in modern works of imagination; and which, where they do appear, are too often disfigured by eccentricity, pretension, or bad taste. In the works before us there is a constant tendency to promote the desire of excellence in ourselves, and the love of it in our neighbours, by making us think honourably of our general nature. Whatever kindly or charitable affection, whatever principle of manly and honest ambition exists within us, is roused and stimulated by the

perusal of these writings; our passions are won to the cause of justice, purity, and self-denial; and the old, indissoluble ties that bind us to country, kindred, and birthplace, appear to strengthen as we read, and brace themselves more firmly about the heart and imagination. Both writers, although peculiarly happy in their conception of all chivalrous and romantic excellencies, are still more distinguished by their deep and true feeling and expressive delineation of the graces and virtues proper to domestic life. The gallant, elevated, and punctilious character which a Frenchman contemplates in speaking of 'un honnête homme,' is singularly combined, in these authors, with the genial, homely good qualities that win from a Caledonian the exclamation of 'honest man!' But the crown of their merits, as virtuous and moral writers, is the manly and exemplary spirit with which, upon all seasonable occasions, they pay honour and homage to religion, ascribing to it its just pre-eminence among the causes of human happiness, and dwelling on it as the only certain source of pure and elevated thoughts, and upright, benevolent, and magnanimous actions.

"This, then, is common to the books of both writers, — that they furnish a direct and distinguished contrast to the atrabilious gloom of some modern works of genius, and the wanton, but not artless levity of others. They yield a memorable, I trust an immortal, accession to the evidences of a truth not always fashionable in literature, that the mind of man may put forth all its bold luxuriance of original thought, strong feeling, and vivid imagination, without being loosed from any sacred and social bond, or pruned of any legitimate affection; and that the Muse is indeed a 'heavenly goddess,' and not a graceless, lawless runagate,

'ἀφεήτους, ἀδίμητους, ἀνίστιος —

"Good sense, the sure foundation of excellence in all the arts, is another leading characteristic of these productions. Assuming the author of Waverley and the author of Marmion to be the same person, it would be difficult in our times to find a second equally free from affectation, prejudice, and every other distortion

or depravity of judgment, whether arising from ignorance, weakness, or corruption of morals. It is astonishing that so voluminous and successful a writer should so seldom be betrayed into any of those 'fantastic tricks' which, in such a man, make 'the angels weep,' and (*è converso*) the critics laugh. He adopts no fashionable cant, colloquial, philosophical, or literary; he takes no delight in being unintelligible; he does not amuse himself by throwing out those fine sentimental and metaphysical threads which float upon the air, and tease and tickle the passengers, but present no palpable substance to their grasp; he aims at no beauties that 'scorn the eye of vulgar light;' he is no dealer in paradoxes; no affecter of new doctrines in taste or morals; he has no eccentric sympathies or antipathies; no maudlin philanthropy, or impertinent cynicism; no non-descript hobby-horse; and with all his matchless energy and originality of mind, he is content to admire popular books, and enjoy popular pleasures; to cherish those opinions which experience has sanctioned; to reverence those institutions which antiquity has hallowed; and to enjoy, admire, cherish, and reverence all these with the same plainness, simplicity, and sincerity as our ancestors did of old.

* * * * * * *

"I cannot help dwelling for a moment on the great similarity of manner apparent in the female portraits of the two writers. The pictures of their heroines are executed with a peculiar fineness, delicacy, and minuteness of touch, and with a care at times almost amounting to timidity, so that they generally appear more highly finished, but less boldly and strikingly thrown out, than the figures with which they are surrounded. Their elegance and purity are always admirable, and are happily combined, in most instances, with unaffected ease and natural spirit. Strong practical sense is their most prevailing characteristic, unaccompanied by any repulsive air of selfishness, pedantry, or unfeminine harshness. Few writers have ever evinced, in so strong a degree as the authors of Marmion and Waverley, that manly regard, and dignified but enthusiastic devotion, which may be expressed by

the term loyalty to the fair sex, the honourable attribute of chivalrous and romantic ages. If they touch on the faults of womankind, their satire is playful, not contemptuous; and their acquaintance with female manners, graces, and foibles, is apparently drawn, not from libertine experience, but from the guileless familiarity of domestic life.

"Of all human ties and connexions there is none so frequently brought in view, or adorned with so many touches of the most affecting eloquence by both these writers, as the pure and tender relation of father and daughter. Douglas and Ellen in the Lady of the Lake will immediately occur to you as a distinguished example. Their mutual affection and solicitude; their pride in each other's excellencies; the parent's regret of the obscurity to which fate has doomed his child; and the daughter's self-devotion to her father's welfare and safety, constitute the highest interest of the poem, and that which is most uniformly sustained; nor does this or any other romance of the same author contain a finer stroke of passion than the overboiling of Douglas's wrath, when, mixed as a stranger with the crowd at Stirling, he sees his daughter's favourite Lufra chastised by the royal huntsman.

"In Rokeby the filial attachment and duteous anxieties of Matilda form the leading feature of her character, and the chief source of her distresses. The intercourse between King Arthur and his daughter Gyneth, in The Bridal of Triermain, is neither long, nor altogether amicable; but the monarch's feelings on first beholding that beautiful 'slip of wilderness,' and his manner of receiving her before the queen and court, are too forcibly and naturally described to be omitted in this enumeration.

"Of all the novels, there are at most but two or three in which a fond father and affectionate daughter may not be pointed out among the principal characters, and in which the main interest of many scenes does not arise out of that paternal and filial relation. What a beautiful display of natural feeling, under every turn of circumstances that can render the situations of child and parent agonizing or delightful, runs through the history of David

Deans and his two daughters! How affecting is the tale of Leicester's unhappy Countess, after we have seen her forsaken father consuming away with moody sorrow in his joyless manor-house! How exquisite are the grouping and contrast of Isaac, the kind but sordid Jew, and his heroic Rebecca, of the buckram Baron of Bradwardine and the sensitive Rose, the reserved but ardent Mannering, and the flighty coquette Julia! In the Antiquary, and Bride of Lammermoor, anxiety is raised to the most painful height by the spectacle of father and daughter exposed together to imminent and frightful peril. The heroines in Rob Roy and the Black Dwarf are duteous and devoted daughters, the one of an unfortunate, the other of an unworthy parent. In the whole story of Kenilworth there is nothing that more strongly indicates a master-hand than the paternal carefulness and apprehensions of the churl Foster; and among the most striking scenes in A Legend of Montrose, is that in which Sir Duncan Campbell is attracted by an obscure yearning of the heart toward his unknown child, the supposed orphan of Darlinvarach."

I must not attempt to follow out Mr Adolphus in his most ingenious tracings of petty coincidences in thought, and, above all, in expression, between the poet of Marmion and the novelist of Waverley. His apology for the minuteness of his detail in that part of his work, is, however, too graceful to be omitted:—"It cannot, I think, appear frivolous or irrelevant, in the enquiry we are pursuing, to dwell on these minute coincidences. Unimportant indeed they are if looked upon as subjects of direct criticism; but considered with reference to our present purpose, they resemble those light substances which, floating on the trackless sea,

discover the true setting of some mighty current: they are the buoyant driftwood which betrays the hidden communication of two great poetic oceans."

I conclude with re-quoting a fragment from one of the quaint tracts of Sir Thomas Urquhart. The following is the epigraph of Mr Adolphus's 5th Letter:—

"O with how great liveliness did he represent the conditions of all manner of men!—From the overweening monarch to the peevish swaine, through all intermediate degrees of the superficial courtier or proud warrior, dissembling churchman, doting old man, cozening lawyer, lying traveler, covetous merchant, rude seaman, pedantick scolar, the amorous shepheard, envious artisan, vain-glorious master and tricky servant;——He had all the jeers, squibs, flouts, buls, quips, taunts, whims, jests, clinches, gybes, mokes, jerks, with all the several kinds of equivocations and other sophistical captions, that could properly be adapted to the person by whose representation he intended to inveagle the company into a fit of mirth!"

I have it not in my power to produce the letter in which Scott conveyed to Heber his opinion of this work. I know, however, that it ended with a request that he should present Mr Adolphus with his thanks for the handsome terms in which his poetical efforts had been spoken of throughout, and request him, in the name of the *author of Marmion*, not to revisit Scotland without reserving a day for Abbotsford; and the *Eidolon* of the author of *Waverley* was made, a few months afterwards, to speak as fol-

lows in the Introduction to the Fortunes of Nigel: —"These letters to the member for the University of Oxford show the wit, genius, and delicacy of the author, which I heartily wish to see engaged on a subject of more importance; and show, besides, that the preservation of my character of *incognito* has engaged early talent in the discussion of a curious question of evidence. But a cause, however ingeniously pleaded, is not therefore gained. You may remember the neatly-wrought chain of circumstantial evidence, so artificially brought forward to prove Sir Philip Francis's title to the Letters of Junius, seemed at first irrefragable; yet the influence of the reasoning has passed away, and Junius, in the general opinion, is as much unknown as ever. But on this subject I will not be soothed or provoked into saying one word more. To say who I am not, would be one step towards saying who I am; and as I desire not, any more than a certain Justice of Peace mentioned by Shenstone, the noise or report such things make in the world, I shall continue to be silent on a subject which, in my opinion, is very undeserving the noise that has been made about it, and still more unworthy of the serious employment of such ingenuity as has been displayed by the young letter-writer." *

* See *Waverley Novels*, vol. xxvi. p. 34.

CHAPTER LIV.

New Buildings at Abbotsford — Chiefswood — William Erskine — Letter to Countess Purgstall — Progress of the Pirate — Private Letters in the Reign of James I. — Commencement of the Fortunes of Nigel — Second Sale of Copyrights — Contract for "Four Works of Fiction" — Enormous profits of the Novelist, and extravagant projects of Constable — The Pirate published — Lord Byron's Cain, dedicated to Scott — Affair of the Beacon Newspaper — Franck's Northern Memoirs, and Notes of Lord Fountainhall, published.

1821.

When Sir Walter returned from London, he brought with him the detailed plans of Mr Atkinson for the completion of his house at Abbotsford; which, however, did not extend to the gateway or the beautiful screen between the court and the garden — for these

graceful parts of the general design were conceptions of his own, reduced to shape by the skill of the Messrs Smith of Darnick. It would not, indeed, be easy for me to apportion rightly the constituent members of the whole edifice;—throughout there were numberless consultations with Mr Blore, Mr Terry, and Mr Skene, as well as with Mr Atkinson —and the actual builders placed considerable inventive talents, as well as admirable workmanship, at the service of their friendly employer. Every preparation was now made by them, and the foundations might have been set about without farther delay; but he was very reluctant to authorize the demolition of the rustic porch of the old cottage, with its luxuriant overgrowth of roses and jessamines; and, in short, could not make up his mind to sign the death-warrant of this favourite bower until winter had robbed it of its beauties. He then made an excursion from Edinburgh, on purpose to be present at its downfall—saved as many of the creepers as seemed likely to survive removal, and planted them with his own hands about a somewhat similar porch, erected expressly for their reception, at his daughter Sophia's little cottage of Chiefswood.

There my wife and I spent this summer and autumn of 1821—the first of several seasons, which will ever dwell on my memory as the happiest of my life. We were near enough Abbotsford to partake as often as we liked of its brilliant society; yet could

do so without being exposed to the worry and exhaustion of spirit which the daily reception of new comers entailed upon all the family except Sir Walter himself. But, in truth, even he was not always proof against the annoyances connected with such a style of open-house-keeping. Even his temper sunk sometimes under the solemn applauses of learned dulness, the vapid raptures of painted and periwigged dowagers, the horse-leech avidity with which underbred foreigners urged their questions, and the pompous simpers of condescending magnates. When sore beset at home in this way, he would every now and then discover that he had some very particular business to attend to on an outlying part of his estate, and craving the indulgence of his guests overnight, appear at the cabin in the glen before its inhabitants were astir in the morning. The clatter of Sibyl Grey's hoofs, the yelping of Mustard and Spice, and his own joyous shout of *reveillée* under our windows, were the signal that he had burst his toils and meant for that day to " take his ease in his inn." On descending, he was to be found seated with all his dogs and ours about him, under a spreading ash that overshadowed half the bank between the cottage and the brook, pointing the edge of his woodman's axe for himself, and listening to Tom Purdie's lecture touching the plantation that most needed thinning. After breakfast, he would take possession of a dressing-room up stairs, and write a chapter of *The*

Pirate; and then, having made up and despatched his packet for Mr Ballantyne, away to join Purdie wherever the foresters were at work—and sometimes to labour among them as strenuously as John Swanston himself—until it was time either to rejoin his own party at Abbotsford or the quiet circle of the cottage. When his guests were few and friendly, he often made them come over and meet him at Chiefswood in a body towards evening; and surely he never appeared to more amiable advantage than when helping his young people with their little arrangements upon such occasions. He was ready with all sorts of devices to supply the wants of a narrow establishment; he used to delight particularly in sinking the wine in a well under the *brae* ere he went out, and hawling up the basket just before dinner was announced—this primitive process being, he said, what he had always practised when a young housekeeper; and in his opinion far superior in its results to any application of ice; and, in the same spirit, whenever the weather was sufficiently genial, he voted for dining out of doors altogether, which at at once got rid of the inconvenience of very small rooms, and made it natural and easy for the gentlemen to help the ladies, so that the paucity of servants went for nothing. Mr Rose used to amuse himself with likening the scene and the party to the closing act of one of those little French dramas, where "Monsieur le Comte" and "Madame la

Comtesse" appear feasting at a village bridal under the trees; but in truth, our "M. le Comte" was only trying to live over again for a few simple hours his own old life of Lasswade.

When circumstances permitted, he usually spent one evening at least in the week at our little cottage; and almost as frequently he did the like with the Fergussons, to whose table he could bring chance visitors, when he pleased, with equal freedom as to his daughter's. Indeed it seemed to be much a matter of chance, any fine day when there had been no alarming invasion of the Southron, whether the three families (which, in fact, made but one) should dine at Abbotsford, at Huntly Burn, or at Chiefswood; and at none of them was the party considered quite complete, unless it included also Mr Laidlaw. Death has laid a heavy hand upon that circle—as happy a circle I believe as ever met. Bright eyes now closed in dust, gay voices for ever silenced, seem to haunt me as I write. With three exceptions, they are all gone. Even since the last of these volumes* was finished, she whom I may now sadly record as, next to Sir Walter himself, the chief ornament and delight as all those simple meetings—she to whose love I owed my own place in them—Scott's eldest daughter, the one of all his children who in countenance, mind, and manners, most resembled himself, and who indeed

* The 4th vol. of the original edition was published in July—the 5th (of which this was the sixth chapter) in October 1837.

was as like him in all things as a gentle innocent woman can ever be to a great man deeply tried and skilled in the struggles and perplexities of active life—she, too, is no more. And in the very hour that saw her laid in her grave, the only other female survivor, her dearest friend Margaret Fergusson, breathed her last also.—But enough—and more than I intended—I must resume the story of Abbotsford.

During several weeks of that delightful summer, Scott had under his roof Mr William Erskine and two of his daughters; this being, I believe, their first visit to Tweedside since the death of Mrs Erskine in September 1819. He had probably made a point of having his friend with him at this particular time, because he was desirous of having the benefit of his advice and corrections from day to day as he advanced in the composition of the Pirate—with the localities of which romance the Sheriff of Orkney and Zetland was of course thoroughly familiar. At all events, the constant and eager delight with which Erskine watched the progress of the tale has left a deep impression on my memory; and indeed I heard so many of its chapters first read from the MS. by him, that I can never open the book now without thinking I hear his voice. Sir Walter used to give him at breakfast the pages he had written that morning; and very commonly, while he was again at work in his study, Erskine would walk over to Chiefswood, that

he might have the pleasure of reading them aloud to my wife and me under our favourite tree, before the packet had to be sealed up for the printer, or rather for the transcriber in Edinburgh. I cannot paint the delight and the pride with which he acquitted himself on such occasions. The little artifice of his manner was merely superficial, and was wholly forgotten as tender affection and admiration, fresh as the impulses of childhood, glistened in his eye, and trembled in his voice.

This reminds me that I have not yet attempted any sketch of the person and manners of Scott's most intimate friend. Their case was no contradiction to the old saying, that the most attached comrades are often very unlike each other in character and temperament. The mere physical contrast was as strong as could well be, and this is not unworthy of notice here; for Erskine was, I think, the only man in whose society Scott took great pleasure, during the more vigorous part of his life, that had neither constitution nor inclination for any of the rough bodily exercises in which he himself delighted. The Counsellor (as Scott always called him) was a little man of feeble make, who seemed unhappy when his pony got beyond a foot-pace, and had never, I should suppose, addicted himself to any out-of-doors sport whatever. He would, I fancy, have as soon thought of slaying his own mutton as of handling a fowling-piece: he used to shudder when he saw a party equip-

ped for coursing, as if murder were in the wind; but the cool meditative angler was in his eyes the abomination of abominations. His small elegant features, hectic cheek, and soft hazel eyes, were the index of the quick sensitive gentle spirit within. He had the warm heart of a woman, her generous enthusiasm, and some of her weaknesses. A beautiful landscape, or a fine strain of music, would send the tears rolling down his cheek; and though capable, I have no doubt, of exhibiting, had his duty called him to do so, the highest spirit of a hero or a martyr, he had very little command over his nerves amidst circumstances such as men of ordinary mould (to say nothing of iron fabrics like Scott's) regard with indifference. He would dismount to lead his horse down what his friend hardly perceived to be a descent at all; grew pale at a precipice; and, unlike the White Lady of Avenel, would go a long way round for a bridge.

Erskine had as yet been rather unfortunate in his professional career, and thought a sheriffship by no means the kind of advancement due to his merits, and which his connexions might naturally have secured for him. These circumstances had at the time when I first observed him tinged his demeanour; he had come to intermingle a certain wayward snappishness now and then with his forensic exhibitions, and in private seemed inclined (though altogether incapable of abandoning the Tory party) to say bitter things of

people in high places; but with these exceptions, never was benevolence towards all the human race more lively and overflowing than his evidently was, even when he considered himself as one who had reason to complain of his luck in the world. Now, however, these little asperities had disappeared; one great real grief had cast its shadow over him, and submissive to the chastisement of heaven, he had no longer any thoughts for the petty misusage of mankind. Scott's apprehension was, that his ambition was extinguished with his resentment; and he was now using every endeavour, in connexion with their common friend the Lord Advocate Rae, to procure for Erskine that long-coveted seat on the bench, about which the subdued widower himself had ceased to occupy his mind. By and by these views were realized to Scott's high satisfaction, and for a brief season with the happiest effect on Erskine's own spirits; but I shall not anticipate the sequel.

Meanwhile he shrunk from the collisions of general society in Edinburgh, and lived almost exclusively in his own little circle of intimates. His conversation, though somewhat precise and finical on the first impression, was rich in knowledge. His literary ambition, active and aspiring at the outset, had long before this time merged in his profound veneration for Scott; but he still read a great deal, and did so as much I believe with a view to assisting Scott by hints and suggestions, as for his own amuse-

ment. He had much of his friend's tact in extracting the picturesque from old, and, generally speaking, dull books; and in bringing out his stores he often showed a great deal of quaint humour and sly wit.

Scott, on his side, respected, trusted, and loved him, much as an affectionate husband does the wife who gave him her heart in youth, and thinks his thoughts rather than her own in the evening of life; he soothed, cheered, and sustained Erskine habitually. I do not believe a more entire and perfect confidence ever subsisted than theirs was and always had been in each other; and to one who had duly observed the creeping jealousies of human nature, it might perhaps seem doubtful on which side the balance of real nobility of heart and character, as displayed in their connexion at the time of which I am speaking, ought to be cast.

Among the common friends of their young days, of whom they both delighted to speak—and always spoke with warm and equal affection—was the sister of their friend Cranstoun, the confidant of Scott's first unfortunate love, whom neither had now seen for a period of more than twenty years. This lady had undergone domestic afflictions more than sufficient to have crushed almost any spirit but her own. Her husband, the Count Purgstall, had died some years before this time, leaving her an only son, a youth of the most amiable disposition, and possessing abilities which, had he lived to develope them, must

have secured for him a high station in the annals of genius. This hope of her eyes, the last heir of an illustrious lineage, followed his father to the tomb in the nineteenth year of his age. The desolate Countess was urged by her family in Scotland to return, after this bereavement, to her native country; but she had vowed to her son on his deathbed, that one day her dust should be mingled with his; and no argument could induce her to depart from the resolution of remaining in solitary Styria. By her desire, a valued friend of the house of Purgstall, who had been born and bred up on their estates, the celebrated Orientalist, Joseph von Hammer, compiled a little memoir of "The Two Last Counts of Purgstall," which he put forth, in January 1821, under the title of "Denkmahl," or Monument; and of this work the Countess sent a copy to Sir Walter (with whom her correspondence had been during several years suspended), by the hands of her eldest brother, Mr Henry Cranstoun, who had been visiting her in Styria, and who at this time occupied a villa within a few miles of Abbotsford. Scott's letter of acknowledgment never reached her; and indeed I doubt if it was ever despatched. He appears to have meditated a set of consolatory verses for its conclusion, and the muse not answering his call at the moment, I suspect he had allowed the sheet, which I now transcribe, to fall aside and be lost sight of among his multifarious masses of MS.

" To the Countess Purgstall, &c. &c.

" My Dear and much-valued Friend,

" You cannot imagine how much I was interested and affected by receiving your token of your kind recollection, after the interval of so many years. Your brother Henry breakfasted with me yesterday, and gave me the letter and the book, which served me as a matter of much melancholy reflection for many hours.

" Hardly anything makes the mind recoil so much upon itself, as the being suddenly and strongly recalled to times long past, and that by the voice of one whom we have so much loved and respected. Do not think I have ever forgotten you, or the many happy days I passed in Frederick Street, in society which fate has separated so far, and for so many years.

" The little volume was particularly acceptable to me, as it acquainted me with many circumstances, of which distance and imperfect communication had either left me entirely ignorant, or had transmitted only inaccurate information.

" Alas! my dear friend, what can the utmost efforts of friendship offer you, beyond the sympathy which, however sincere, must sound like an empty compliment in the ear of affliction? God knows

with what willingness I would undertake anything which might afford you the melancholy consolation of knowing how much your old and early friend interests himself in the sad event which has so deeply wounded your peace of mind. The verses, therefore, which conclude this letter, must not be weighed according to their intrinsic value, for the more inadequate they are to express the feelings they would fain convey, the more they show the author's anxious wish to do what may be grateful to you.

" In truth, I have long given up poetry. I have had my day with the public; and being no great believer in poetical immortality, I was very well pleased to rise a winner, without continuing the game till I was beggared of any credit I had acquired. Besides, I felt the prudence of giving way before the more forcible and powerful genius of Byron. If I were either greedy, or jealous of poetical fame— and both are strangers to my nature— I might comfort myself with the thought, that I would hesitate to strip myself to the contest so fearlessly as Byron does; or to command the wonder and terror of the public, by exhibiting, in my own person, the sublime attitude of the dying gladiator. But with the old frankness of twenty years since, I will fairly own, that this same delicacy of mine may arise more from conscious want of vigour and inferiority, than from a delicate dislike to the nature of the conflict. At any rate, there is a time for everything, and without

swearing oaths to it, I think my time for poetry has gone by.

"My health suffered horridly last year, I think from over labour and excitation; and though it is now apparently restored to its usual tone, yet during the long and painful disorder (spasms in the stomach), and the frightful process of cure, by a prolonged use of calomel, I learned that my frame was made of flesh, and not of iron—a conviction which I will long keep in remembrance, and avoid any occupation so laborious and agitating, as poetry must be to be worth anything.

"In this humour, I often think of passing a few weeks on the continent—a summer vacation if I can—and of course my attraction to Gratz would be very strong. I fear this is the only chance of our meeting in this world—we, who once saw each other daily! for I understand from George and Henry, that there is little chance of your coming here. And when I look around me, and consider how many changes you would see in feature, form, and fashion, amongst all you knew and loved; and how much, no sudden squall, or violent tempest, but the slow and gradual progress of life's long voyage, has severed all the gallant fellowships whom you left spreading their sails to the morning breeze, I really am not sure that you would have much pleasure.

"The gay and wild romance of life is over with all of us. The real, dull, and stern history of hu-

manity has made a far greater progress over our heads; and age, dark and unlovely, has laid his crutch over the stoutest fellow's shoulders. One thing your old society may boast, that they have all run their course with honour, and almost all with distinction; and the brother suppers of Frederick Street have certainly made a very considerable figure in the world, as was to be expected, from her talents under whose auspices they were assembled.

"One of the most pleasant sights which you would see in Scotland, as it now stands, would be your brother George in possession of the most beautiful and romantic place in Clydesdale—Corehouse. I have promised often to go out with him, and assist him with my deep experience as a planter and landscape gardener. I promise you my oaks will outlast my laurels; and I pique myself more upon my compositions for manure than on any other compositions whatsoever to which I was ever accessary. But so much does business of one sort or other engage us both, that we never have been able to fix a time which suited us both; and with the utmost wish to make out the party, perhaps we never may.

"This is a melancholy letter, but it is chiefly so from the sad tone of yours—who have had such real disasters to lament—while mine is only the humorous sadness, which a retrospect on human life is sure to produce on the most prosperous. For my

own course of life, I have only to be ashamed of its prosperity, and afraid of its termination; for I have little reason, arguing on the doctrine of chances, to hope that the same good fortune will attend me for ever. I have had an affectionate and promising family, many friends, few unfriends, and, I think, no enemies—and more of fame and fortune than mere literature ever procured for a man before.

"I dwell among my own people, and have many whose happiness is dependent on me, and which I study to the best of my power. I trust my temper, which you know is by nature good and easy, has not been spoiled by flattery or prosperity; and therefore I have escaped entirely that irritability of disposition which I think is planted, like the slave in the poet's chariot, to prevent his enjoying his triumph.

"Should things, therefore, change with me—and in these times, or indeed in any times, such change is to be apprehended—I trust I shall be able to surrender these adventitious advantages, as I would my upper dress, as something extremely comfortable, but which I can make shift to do without."* . . . .

* In communicating this letter to my friend Captain Hall, when he was engaged in his Account of a Visit to Madame de Purgstall during the last months of her life, I suggested to him, in consequence of an expression about Scott's health, that it must have been written in 1820. The date of the "Denkmahl," to which it refers, is, however, sufficient evidence that I ought to have said 1821.

As I may have no occasion hereafter to allude to the early friend with whose sorrows Scott thus sympathized amidst the meridian splendours of his own worldly career, I may take this opportunity of mentioning, that Captain Basil Hall's conjecture of her having been the original of Diana Vernon, appeared to myself from the first chimerical; and that I have since heard those who knew her best in the days of her intercourse with Sir Walter, express the same opinion in the most decided manner. But to return.

While the Pirate was advancing under Mr Erskine's eye, Scott had even more than the usual allowance of minor literary operations on hand. He edited a reprint of a curious old book, called "Franck's Northern Memoir, and the Contemplative Angler;' and he also prepared for the press a volume published soon after, under the title of "Chronological Notes on Scottish Affairs, 1680 to 1701, from the Diary of Lord Fountainhall." The professional writings of that celebrated old lawyer had been much in his hands from his early years, on account of the incidental light which they throw on the events of a most memorable period in Scottish history: and he seems to have contemplated some more considerable selection from his remains, but to have dropped these intentions, on being given to understand that they might interfere with those of Lord Fountainhall's accomplished representative, the present Sir

Thomas Dick Lauder, Baronet. It is, however, to be regretted, that Sir Thomas's promise of a Life of his eminent ancestor has not yet been redeemed.

In August appeared the volume of the Novelist's Library, containing Scott's Life of Smollett; and it being now ascertained that John Ballantyne had died a debtor, the editor offered to proceed with this series of prefaces, on the footing that the whole profits of the work should go to his widow. Mr Constable, whose health was now beginning to break, had gone southwards in quest of more genial air, and was at Hastings when he heard of this proposition. He immediately wrote to me, entreating me to represent to Sir Walter that the undertaking, having been coldly received at first, was unlikely to grow in favour if continued on the same plan — that in his opinion the bulk of the volumes, and the small type of their text, had been unwisely chosen for a work of mere entertainment, and could only be suitable for one of reference; that Ballantyne's Novelist's Library, therefore, ought to be stopped at once, and another in a lighter shape, to range with the late collected edition of the first series of the Waverley Romances, announced with his own name as publisher, and Scott's as editor. He proposed at the same time to commence the issue of a Select Library of English Poetry, with prefaces and a few notes by the same hand; and calculating that each of these collections should extend to twenty-five volumes,

and that the publication of both might be concluded within two years — "the writing of the prefaces, &c. forming perhaps an occasional relief from more important labours"! — the bookseller offered to pay their editor in all the sum of £6000: a small portion of which sum, as he hinted, would undoubtedly be more than Mrs John Ballantyne could ever hope to derive from the prosecution of her husband's last publishing adventure. Various causes combined to prevent the realization of these magnificent projects. Scott now, as at the beginning of his career of speculation, had views about what a collection of English Poetry should be, in which even Constable could not, on consideration, be made to concur; and I have already explained the coldness with which he regarded further attempts upon our Elder Novelists. The Ballantyne Library crept on to the tenth volume, and was then dropt abruptly; and the double negotiation with Constable was never renewed.

Lady Louisa Stuart had not, I fancy, read Scott's Lives of the Novelists until, some years after this time, they were collected into two little piratical duodecimos by a Parisian bookseller; and on her then expressing her admiration of them, together with her astonishment that the speculation of which they formed a part should have attracted little notice of any sort, he answered as follows:—"I am delighted they afford any entertainment, for they are rather flimsily written, being done merely to oblige

a friend: they were yoked to a great, ill-conditioned, lubberly, double-columned book, which they were as useful to tug along as a set of fleas would be to draw a mail-coach. It is very difficult to answer your Ladyship's curious question concerning change of taste; but whether in young or old, it takes place insensibly without the parties being aware of it. A grand-aunt of my own, Mrs Keith of Ravelstone, who was a person of some condition, being a daughter of Sir John Swinton of Swinton — lived with unabated vigour of intellect to a very advanced age. She was very fond of reading, and enjoyed it to the last of her long life. One day she asked me, when we happened to be alone together, whether I had ever seen Mrs Behn's novels? — I confessed the charge. — Whether I could get her a sight of them? — I said, with some hesitation, I believed I could; but that I did not think she would like either the manners, or the language, which approached too near that of Charles II.'s time to be quite proper reading. 'Nevertheless,' said the good old lady, 'I remember them being so much admired, and being so much interested in them myself, that I wish to look at them again.' To hear was to obey. So I sent Mrs Aphra Behn, curiously sealed up, with 'private and confidential' on the packet, to my gay old grand-aunt. The next time I saw her afterwards, she gave me back Aphra, properly wrapped up, with nearly these words: — 'Take back your

bonny Mrs Behn; and, if you will take my advice, put her in the fire, for I found it impossible to get through the very first novel. But is it not,' she said, 'a very odd thing that I, an old woman of eighty and upwards, sitting alone, feel myself ashamed to read a book which, sixty years ago, I have heard read aloud for the amusement of large circles, consisting of the first and most creditable society in London.' This, of course, was owing to the gradual improvement of the national taste and delicacy. The change that brings into and throws out of fashion particular styles of composition, is something of the same kind. It does not signify what the greater or less merit of the book is:—the reader, as Tony Lumpkin says, must be in a concatenation accordingly—the fashion, or the general taste, must have prepared him to be pleased, or put him on his guard against it. It is much like *dress*. If Clarissa should appear before a modern party in her lace ruffles and head-dress, or Lovelace in his wig, however genteelly powdered, I am afraid they would make no conquests; the fashion which makes conquests of us in other respects, is very powerful in literary composition, and adds to the effect of some works, while in others it forms their sole merit."

Among other miscellaneous work of this autumn, Scott amused some leisure hours with writing a series of "Private Letters," supposed to have been discovered in the repositories of a Noble English

Family, and giving a picture of manners in town and country during the early part of the reign of James I. These letters were printed as fast as he penned them, in a handsome quarto form, and he furnished the margin with a running commentary of notes, drawn up in the character of a disappointed chaplain, a keen Whig, or rather Radical, overflowing on all occasions with spleen against Monarchy and Aristocracy. When the printing had reached the 72d page, however, he was told candidly by Erskine, by James Ballantyne, and also by myself, that, however clever his imitation of the epistolary style of the period in question, he was throwing away in these letters the materials of as good a romance as he had ever penned; and a few days afterwards he said to me — patting Sibyl's neck till she danced under him — "You were all quite right: if the letters had passed for genuine they would have found favour only with a few musty antiquaries, and if the joke were detected, there was not story enough to carry it off. I shall burn the sheets, and give you Bonny King Jamie and all his tail in the old shape, as soon as I can get Captain Goffe within view of the gallows."

Such was the origin of the "Fortunes of Nigel." As one set of the uncompleted Letters has been preserved, I shall here insert a specimen of them, in which the reader will easily recognise the germ of more than one scene of the novel.

"*Jenkin Harman to the Lord* ——

"My Lord,

"Towching this new mishappe of Sir Thomas, whereof your Lordshippe makes querie of me, I wolde hartilie that I could, truth and my bounden dutie alweys firste satisfied, make suche answer as were fullie pleasaunte to me to write, or unto your Lordshippe to reade. But what remedy? young men will have stirring bloodes; and the courtier-like gallants of the time will be gamesome and dangerous, as they have beene in dayes past. I think your Lordshippe is so wise, as to caste one eye backe to your own more juvenile time, whilest you looke forward with the other upon this mischaunce, which, upon my lyfe, will be founde to be no otherwise harmful to Sir Thomas than as it shews him an hastie Hotspur of the day, suddenlie checking at whatsoever may seem to smirche his honour. As I am a trew man, and your Lordship's poore kinsman and bounden servant, I think ther lives not a gentleman more trew to his friende than Sir Thomas; and although ye be but brothers uterine, yet so dearly doth he holde your favour, that his father, were the gode knight alyve, should not have more swaye with him than shalle your Lordship; and, also, it is no kindly part to sow discord betwene brethrene; for, as the holy Psalmist saythe, '*Ecce quam bonum et quam jucundum habitare fratres,*' &c. And moreover, it needes not to tell your Lordshippe that Sir Thomas is suddene in his anger; and it was but on Wednesday last that he said to me, with moche distemperature, — Master Jenkin, I be tolde that ye meddle and make betwene me and my Lorde my brother; wherfore, take this for feyr warninge, that when I shall fynde you so dooying, I will incontinent put my dager to the hilte in you:— and this was spoken with all earnestness of visage and actioun, grasping of his poinard's handle, as one who wolde presentlie make his words good. Surely, my Lord, it is not fair carriage toward you pore kinsman if anie out of your house make such

reports of me, and of that which I have written to you in sympleness of herte, and in obedience to your commandemente, which is my law on this matter. Truely, my Lord, I wolde this was well looked to, otherweys my rewarde for trew service might be to handsell with my herte's blode the steel of a Milan poignado. Natheless, I will procede with my mater, fal back fal edge, trustyng all utterly in the singleness of my integretie, and in your Lordshippe's discretioun.

"My Lorde, the braule which hath befallen chaunced this waye, and not otherwise. It hap'd that one Raines, the master of the ordinarie where his honour Sir Thomas eteth well nie dailie (when he is not in attendance at courte, wherein he is perchance more slacke than were wise), shoulde assemble some of the beste who haunte his house, havying diet ther for money. The purpose, as shewn forthe, was to tast a new piece of choice wyne, and ther Sir Thomas must nedes be, .or the purpos holdes not, and the Alicant becometh Bastard. Wel, my Lord, dice ther wer and musaic, lustie helthes and dizzie braines, — some saye fair ladyes also, of which I know nought, save that suche cockatrices hatch wher such cockes of the game do haunt. Alweys ther was revel and wassail enow and to spare. Now it chaunced, that whilst one Dutton, of Graie's-Inn, an Essex man, held the dice, Sir Thomas fillethe a fulle carouse to the helth of the fair Ladie Elizabeth. Trulie, my Lord, I cannot blame his devotioun to so fair a saint, though I may wish the chapel for his adoration had been better chosen, and the companie more suitable; *sed respice finem.* The pledge being given, and alle men on foote, aye, and some on knee, to drink the same, young Philip Darcy, a near kinsman of my Lorde's, or so callyng himself, takes on him to check at the helthe, askyng Sir Thomas if he were willinge to drink the same in a Venetian glasse? the mening of whiche hard sentence your Lordshippe shal esilie construe. Whereupon Sir Thomas, your Lordshippe's brother, somewhat shrewishly demanded whether that were his game or his earnest; to which demaunde the uther answers recklessly as he that wolde not be brow-beaten, that

Sir Thomas might take it for game or ernest as him listed. Whereupon your Lordshippe's brother, throwing down withal the woodcocke's bill, with which, as the fashioun goes, he was picking his teeth, answered redily, he cared not that for his game or ernest, for that neither were worth a bean. A small matter this to make such a storie, for presentlie young Darcie up with the wine-pot in which they had assaid the freshe hogshede, and heveth it at Sir Thomas, which vessel missing of the mark it was aym'd at, encountreth the hede of Master Dutton, when the outside of the flaggon did that which peradventure the inside had accomplish'd somewhat later in the evening, and stretcheth him on the flore; and then the crie arose, and you might see twenty swords oute at once, and none rightly knowing wherfor. And the groomes and valets, who waited in the street and in the kitchen, and who, as seldom failes, had been as besy with the beer as their masters with the wine, presentlie fell at odds, and betoke themselves to their weapones; so ther was bouncing of bucklers, and bandying of blades, instede of clattering of quart pottles, and chiming of harpis and fiddles. At length comes the wache, and, as oft happens in the like affraies, alle men join ageynst them, and they are beten bak: An honest man, David Booth, constable of the night, and a chandler by trade, is sorely hurt. The crie rises of Prentices, prentices, Clubs, clubs, for word went that the court-gallants and the Graie's-Inn men had murther'd a citizen; all mene take the street, and the whole ward is uppe, none well knowing why. Menewhile our gallants had the lucke and sense to disperse their company, some getting them into the Temple, the gates wherof were presentlie shut to prevent pursuite I warrant, and some taking boat as they might; water thus saving whom wyne hath endaunger'd. The Alderman of the ward, worthy Master Danvelt, with Master Deputy, and others of repute, bestow'd themselves not a litel to compose the tumult, and so al past over for the evening.

"My Lord, this is the hole of the mater, so far as my earnest and anxious serch had therein, as well for the sake of my blode-relation to your honourable house, as frome affectioun to my

kinsman Sir Thomas, and especiallie in humble obedience to your regarded commandes. As for other offence given by Sir Thomas, whereof idle bruites are current, as that he should have call'd Master Darcie a codshead or an woodcocke, I can lerne of no such termes, nor any nere to them, only that when he said he cared not for his game or ernest, he flung down the woodcock's bill, to which it may be there was sticking a part of the head, though my informant saithe otherwise; and he stode so close by Sir Thomas, that he herde the quart-pot whissel as it flew betwixt there too hedes. Of damage done among the better sort, there is not muche; some cuts and thrusts ther wer, that had their sequents in blood and woundes, but none dedlie. Of the rascal sort, one fellowe is kill'd, and sundrie hurt. Hob Hilton, your brother's grome, for life a maymed man, having a slash over the right hande, for faulte of a gauntlet.—Marry he has been a brave knave and a sturdie: and if it pleses your goode Lordshippe, I fynd he wolde gladlie be preferr'd when tym is fitting, to the office of bedle. He hath a burlie frame, and scare-babe visage; he shall do wel enoughe in such charge, though lackyng the use of four fingers.* The hurtyng of the constabel is a worse matter; as also the anger that is between the courtiers and Graie's-Inn men; so that yf close hede be not given, I doubt me we shall here of more *Gesto Graiorum*. Thei will not be persuaded but that the quarrel betwixt Sir Thomas and young Darcie was simulate; and that Master Dutton's hurte wes wilful; whereas, on my lyfe, it will not be founde so.

"The counseyl hath taen the matter up, and I here H. M. spoke many things gravely and solidly, and as one who taketh to hert such unhappie chaunces, both against brauling and drinking. Sir Thomas, with others, hath put in plegge to be forthcoming;

* "The death of the *rascal* sort is mentioned as he would have commemorated that of a dog; and his readiest plan of providing for a profligate menial, is to place him in superintendence of the unhappy poor, over whom his fierce looks and rough demeanour are to supply the means of authority, which his arm can no longer enforce by actual violence!"

and so strictly taken up was the unhappie mater of the Scots Lord,* that if Booth shulde die, which God forefend, there might be a fereful reckoning: For one cityzen sayeth, I trust falalie, he saw Sir Thomas draw back his hand, having in it a drawn sword, just as the constabel felle. It seems but too constant, that thei were within but short space of ech other when his unhappy chaunce befel. My Lord, it is not for me to saie what course your Lordshippe should steer in this storm, onlie that the Lord Chansellour's gode worde wil, as resen is, do yeoman's service. Schulde it come to fine or imprisonment, as is to be fered, why should not your Lordshippe cast the weyght into the balance for that restraint which goode Sir Thomas must nedes bear himself, rather than for such penalty as must nedes pinche the purses of his frendes. Your Lordship always knoweth best; but surely the yonge knyght hath but litel reson to expect that you shulde further engage yourself in such bondes as might be necessary to bring this fine unto the Chequer. Nether have wise men helde it unfit that heated bloode be coold by sequestration for a space from temptation. There is dout, moreover, whether he may not hold himself bounden, according to the forme of faythe which such gallants and stirring spirits profess, to have further meeting with Master Philip Darcie, or this same Dutton, or with bothe, on this rare dependence of an woodcocke's hede, and a quart-pot; certeynly, methoughte, the last tym we met, and when he bare himself towards me, as I have premonish'd your Lordshippe, that he was fitter for quiet residence under safe keeping, than for a free walk amongst peceful men.

"And thus, my Lord, ye have the whole mater before you; trew ye shall find it, — my dutie demands it,— unpleasing, I cannot amende it: .But I truste neither more evil *in esse* nor *in posse*, than I have set forth as above. From one who is ever your Lordshippe's most bounden to command, &c.—J. H."

* "Perhaps the case of Lord Sanquhar. His Lordship had the misfortune to be hanged, for causing a poor fencing-master to be assassinated, which seems the unhappy matter alluded to."

I think it must have been about the middle of October that he dropped the scheme of this fictitious correspondence. I well remember the morning that he began the Fortunes of Nigel. The day being destined for Newark Hill, I went over to Abbotsford before breakfast, and found Mr Terry (who had been staying there for some time) walking about with his friend's master-mason (John Smith), of whose proceedings he took a fatherly charge, as he might well do, since the plan of the building had been in a considerable measure the work of his own taste. While Terry and I were chatting, Scott came out, bareheaded, with a bunch of MS. in his hand, and said, "Well, lads, I've laid the keel of a new lugger this morning—here it is—be off to the water-side, and let me hear how you like it." Terry took the papers, and walking up and down by the river, read to me the first chapter of Nigel. He expressed great delight with the animated opening, and especially with the contrast between its thorough stir of London life, and a chapter about Norna of the Fitful-head, in the third volume of the Pirate, which had been given to him in a similar manner the morning before. I could see that (according to the Sheriff's phrase) *he smelt roast meat;* here there was every prospect of a fine field for the art of *Terryfication.* The actor, when our host met us returning from the haugh, did not fail to express his opinion that the new novel would be of this quality. Sir Walter, as

he took the MS. from his hand, eyed him with a gay smile, in which genuine benevolence mingled with mock exultation, and then throwing himself into an attitude of comical dignity, he rolled out, in the tones of John Kemble, one of the loftiest bursts of Ben Johnson's Mammon—

> "Come on, sir. Now you set your foot on shore
> In *In Novo orbe*—
> ——————— Pertinax, my Surly,*
> Again I say to thee aloud, Be rich,
> This day thou shalt have ingots."—

This was another period of "refreshing the machine." Early in November, I find Sir Walter writing thus to Constable's partner, Mr Cadell: "I want two books, Malcolm's London Redivivus, or some such name, and Derham's Artificial Clockmaker." [The reader of Nigel will understand these requests.] "All good luck to you, commercially and otherwise. I am grown a shabby letter-writer, for my eyes are not so young as they were, and I grudge everything that does not go to press." Such a feeling must often have been present with him; yet I can find no period when he grudged writing a letter

* The fun of this application of "my Surly" will not escape any one who remembers the kind and good-humoured Terry's power of assuming a peculiarly saturnine aspect. This queer grimness of look was invaluable to the comedian in several of his best parts; and in private he often called it up when his heart was most cheerful.

that might by possibility be of use to any of his family or friends, and I must quote one of the many which about this very time reached his second son.

"*To Mr Charles Scott,*

(Care of the Rev. Mr Williams, Lampeter.)

"21st Nov. 1821.

"My Dear Charles,

"I had the pleasure of your letter two days since, being the first symptom of your being alive and well which I have had *directly* since you left Abbotsford. I beg you will be more frequent in your communications, which must always be desirable when you are at such a distance. I am very glad to hear you are attending closely to make up lost time. Sport is a good thing both for health and pastime; but you must never allow it to interfere with serious study. You have, my dear boy, your own fortune to make, with better assistance of every kind than I had when the world first opened on me; and I assure you that had I not given some attention to learning (I have often regretted that, from want of opportunity, indifferent health, and some indolence, I did not do all I might have done), my own situation, and the advantages which I may be able to procure for you, would have been very much bounded. Consider, therefore, study as the principal object. Many men have read and written their

way to independence and fame; but no man ever gained it by exclusive attention to exercises or to pleasures of any sort. You do not say anything of your friend Mr Surtees,* who I hope is well. We all remember him with much affection, and should be sorry to think we were forgotten.

"Our Abbotsford hunt went off extremely well. We killed seven hares, I think, and our dogs behaved very well. A large party dined, and we sat down about twenty-five at table. Every gentleman present sung a song, *tant bien que mal*, excepting Walter, Lockhart, and I myself. I believe I should add the melancholy Jaques, Mr Waugh, who, on this occasion, however, was not melancholy.† In short, we had a very merry and sociable party.

"There is, I think, no news here. The hedger, Captain Davidson,‡ has had a bad accident, and in-

* Mr Villiers Surtees, a school-fellow of Charles Scott's at Lampeter, had spent the vacation of this year at Abbotsford. He is now one of the Supreme Judges at the Mauritius.

† Mr Waugh was a retired West Indian, of very dolorous aspect, who had settled at Melrose, built a large house there, surrounded it and his garden with a huge wall, and seldom emerged from his own precincts except upon the grand occasion of the Abbotsford Hunt. The villagers called him "the Melancholy Man"—and considered him as already "dreein' his dole for doings amang the poor niggers."

‡ This hedger had got the title of Captain, in memory of his gallantry at some *row*.

jured his leg much by the fall of a large stone. I am very anxious about him as a faithful and honest servant. Every one else at Abbotsford, horses and dogs included, are in great preservation.

"You ask me about reading history. You are quite right to read Clarendon—his style is a little long-winded; but, on the other hand, his characters may match those of the ancient historians, and one thinks they would know the very men if you were to meet them in society. Few English writers have the same precision, either in describing the actors in great scenes, or the deeds which they performed. He was, you are aware, himself deeply engaged in the scenes which he depicts, and therefore colours them with the individual feeling, and sometimes, doubtless, with the partiality of a partisan. Yet I think he is, on the whole, a fair writer; for though he always endeavours to excuse King Charles, yet he points out his mistakes and errors, which certainly are neither few nor of slight consequence. Some of his history regards the country in which you are now a resident; and you will find that much of the fate of that Great Civil War turned on the successful resistance made by the city of Gloucester, and the relief of that place by the Earl of Essex, by means of the trained bands of London, a sort of force resembling our local militia or volunteers. They are the subject of ridicule in all the plays and poems of

the time; yet the sort of practice of arms which they had acquired, enabled them to withstand the charge of Prince Rupert and his gallant cavalry, who were then foiled for the first time. Read, my dear Charles, read, and read that which is useful. Man only differs from birds and beasts, because he has the means of availing himself of the knowledge acquired by his predecessors. The swallow builds the same nest which its father and mother built; and the sparrow does not improve by the experience of its parents. The son of the learned pig, if it had one, would be a mere brute, fit only to make bacon of. It is not so with the human race. Our ancestors lodged in caves and wigwams, where we construct palaces for the rich, and comfortable dwellings for the poor; and why is this — but because our eye is enabled to look back upon the past, to improve upon our ancestors' improvements, and to avoid their errors? This can only be done by studying history, and comparing it with passing events. God has given you a strong memory, and the power of understanding that which you give your mind to with attention — but all the advantage to be derived from these qualities must depend on your own determination to avail yourself of them, and improve them to the uttermost. That you should do so, will be the greatest satisfaction I can receive in my advanced life, and when my thoughts must be entirely turned on the success of my children. Write to me more

frequently, and mention your studies particularly, and I will on my side be a good correspondent.

"I beg my compliments to Mr and Mrs Williams. I have left no room to sign myself your affectionate father, W. S."

To return to business and Messrs Constable. Sir Walter concluded before he went to town in November another negotiation of importance with this house. They agreed to give for the remaining copyright of the four novels published between December 1819 and January 1821—to wit, Ivanhoe, the Monastery, the Abbot, and Kenilworth—the sum of five thousand guineas. The stipulation about not revealing the author's name, under a penalty of £2000, was repeated. By these four novels, the fruits of scarcely more than twelve months' labour, he had already cleared at least £10,000 before this bargain was completed. They, like their predecessors, were now issued in a collective shape, under the title of "*Historical Romances*, by the Author of Waverley."

I cannot pretend to guess what the actual state of Scott's pecuniary affairs was at the time when John Ballantyne's death relieved them from one great source of complication and difficulty. But I have said enough to satisfy every reader, that when he began the second, and far the larger division of his building at Abbotsford, he must have contemplated

the utmost sum it could cost him as a mere trifle in relation to the resources at his command. He must have reckoned on clearing £30,000 at least in the course of a couple of years by the novels written within such a period. The publisher of his Tales, who best knew how they were produced, and what they brought of gross profit, and who must have had the strongest interest in keeping the author's name untarnished by any risk or reputation of failure, would willingly, as we have seen, have given him £6000 more within a space of two years for works of a less serious sort, likely to be despatched at leisure hours, without at all interfering with the main manufacture. But alas!—even this was not all. Messrs Constable had such faith in the prospective fertility of his imagination, that they were by this time quite ready to sign bargains and grant bills for novels and romances to be produced hereafter, but of which the subjects and the names were alike unknown to them and to the man from whose pen they were to proceed. A forgotten satirist well says,—

> "The active principle within
> Works on some brains the effect of gin;"

but in his case, every external influence combined to stir the flame, and swell the intoxication of restless exuberant energy. His allies knew, indeed, what he did not, that the sale of his novels was rather less than it had been in the days of Ivanhoe; and hints

had sometimes been dropped to him that it might be well to try the effects of a pause. But he always thought—and James Ballantyne had decidedly the same opinion—that his best things were those which he threw off the most easily and swiftly; and it was no wonder that his booksellers, seeing how immeasurably even his worst excelled in popularity, as in merit, any other person's best, should have shrunk from the experiment of a decisive damper. On the contrary, they might be excused for from time to time flattering themselves that if the books sold at a less rate, this might be counterpoised by still greater rapidity of production. They could not make up their minds to cast the peerless vessel adrift; and, in short, after every little whisper of prudential misgiving, echoed the unfailing burden of Ballantyne's song—to push on, hoisting more and more sail as the wind lulled.

He was as eager to do as they could be to suggest—and this I well knew at the time. I had, however, no notion, until all his correspondence lay before me, of the extent to which he had permitted himself thus early to build on the chances of life, health, and continued popularity. Before the Fortunes of Nigel issued from the press, Scott had exchanged instruments, and received his bookseller's bills, for no less than four "works of fiction"—not one of them otherwise described in the deeds of agreement—to be produced in unbroken succession, each

of them to fill at least three volumes, but with proper saving clauses as to increase of copy-money, in case any of them should run to four. And within two years all this anticipation had been wiped off by Peveril of the Peak, Quentin Durward, St Ronan's Well, and Redgauntlet; and the new castle was by that time complete, and overflowing with all its splendour; but by that time the end also was approaching!

The splendid Romance of the Pirate was published in the beginning of December 1821; and the wild freshness of its atmosphere, the beautiful contrast of Minna and Brenda, and the exquisitely drawn character of Captain Cleveland, found the reception which they deserved. The work was analyzed with remarkable care in the Quarterly Review—by a critic second to few, either in the manly heartiness of his sympathy with the felicities of genius, or in the honest acuteness of his censure in cases of negligence and confusion. This was the second of a series of articles in that Journal, conceived and executed in a tone widely different from those given to Waverley, Guy Mannering, and the Antiquary. I fancy Mr Gifford had become convinced that he had made a grievous mistake in this matter, before he acquiesced in Scott's proposal about "quartering the child" in January 1816; and if he was fortunate in finding a contributor able and willing to treat the rest of Father Jedediah's progeny with excellent

skill, and in a spirit more accordant with the just and general sentiments of the public, we must also recognise a pleasing and honourable trait of character in the frankness with which the recluse and often despotic editor now delegated the pen to Mr Senior.

On the 13th December, Sir Walter received a copy of CAIN, as yet unpublished, from Lord Byron's bookseller, who had been instructed to ask whether he had any objection to having the "Mystery" dedicated to him. He replied in these words:—

"*To John Murray, Esq., Albemarle Street, London.*

"Edinburgh, 17th December 1821.

"My Dear Sir,

"I accept with feelings of great obligation the flattering proposal of Lord Byron to prefix my name to the very grand and tremendous drama of Cain. I may be partial to it, and you will allow I have cause; but I do not know that his Muse has ever taken so lofty a flight amid her former soarings. He has certainly matched Milton on his own ground. Some part of the language is bold, and may shock one class of readers, whose tone will be adopted by others out of affectation or envy. But then they must condemn the Paradise Lost, if they have a mind to be consistent. The fiend-like reasoning and bold blasphemy of the fiend and of his pupil,

lead exactly to the point which was to be expected — the commission of the first murder, and the ruin and despair of the perpetrator.

"I do not see how any one can accuse the author himself of Manicheism. The devil takes the language of that sect, doubtless; because, not being able to deny the existence of the Good Principle, he endeavours to exalt himself — the Evil Principle — to a seeming equality with the Good; but such arguments, in the mouth of such a being, can only be used to deceive and to betray. Lord Byron might have made this more evident, by placing in the mouth of Adam, or of some good and protecting spirit, the reasons which render the existence of moral evil consistent with the general benevolence of the Deity. The great key to the mystery is, perhaps, the imperfection of our own faculties, which see and feel strongly the partial evils which press upon us, but know too little of the general system of the universe, to be aware how the existence of these is to be reconciled with the benevolence of the great Creator. — Ever yours truly,

WALTER SCOTT."

In some preceding narratives of Sir Walter Scott's Life, I find the principal feature for 1821 to be an affair of which I have as yet said nothing; and which, notwithstanding the examples I have before me, I must be excused for treating on a scale com-

mensurate with his real share and interest therein. I allude to an unfortunate newspaper, by name *The Beacon*, which began to be published in Edinburgh in January 1821, and was abruptly discontinued in the August of the same year. It originated in the alarm with which the Edinburgh Tories contemplated the progress of Radical doctrines during the agitation of the Queen's business in 1820 — and the want of any adequate counteraction on the part of the Ministerial newspapers in the north. James Ballantyne had on that occasion swerved from his banner — and by so doing given not a little offence to Scott. He approved, therefore, of the project of a new Weekly Journal, to be conducted by some steadier hand;* and when it was proposed to raise the requisite capital for the speculation by private subscription, expressed his willingness to contribute whatever sum should be named by other gentlemen of his standing. This was accepted of course; but every part of the advice with which the only man in the whole conclave that understood a jot about such things coupled his tender of alliance, was departed from in practice. No experienced and responsible editor of the sort he pointed out as indispensable

* It has been asserted, since this work first appeared, that the editorship of the proposed journal was offered to Ballantyne, and declined by him. If so, he had no doubt found the offer accompanied with a requisition of political pledges, which he could not grant. [1839.]

was secured; the violence of disaffected spleen was encountered by a vein of satire which seemed more fierce than frolicsome; the Law Officers of the Crown, whom he had most strenuously cautioned against any participation in the concern, were rash enough to commit themselves in it; the subscribers, like true Scotchmen, in place of paying down their money and thinking no more of that part of the matter, chose to put their names to a bond of security on which the sum total was to be advanced by bankers, and thus, by their own over-caution as to a few pounds, laid the foundation for a long train of humiliating distresses and disgraces; and finally, when the rude drollery of the young hot-bloods to whom they had entrusted the editorship of their paper produced its natural consequences, and the ferment of Whig indignation began to boil over upon the dignified patrons of what was denounced as a systematic scheme of calumny and defamation — these seniors shrunk from the dilemma as rashly as they had plunged into it, and instead of compelling the juvenile allies to adopt a more prudent course, and gradually give the journal a tone worthy of open approbation, they, at the first blush of personal difficulty, left their instruments in the lurch, and, without even consulting Scott, ordered the Beacon to be extinguished at an hour's notice.

A more pitiable mass of blunder and imbecility was never heaped together than the whole of this

affair exhibited; and from a very early period Scott was so disgusted with it, that he never even saw the newspaper, of which Whigs and Radicals believed, or affected to believe, that the conduct and management were in some degree at least under his dictation. The results were lamentable: the Beacon was made the subject of Parliamentary discussion, from which the then heads of Scotch Toryism did not escape in any very consolatory plight; but above all, the Beacon bequeathed its rancour and rashness, though not its ability, to a Glasgow paper of similar form and pretensions, entitled The Sentinel. By that organ the personal quarrels of the Beacon were taken up and pursued with relentless industry; and finally, the Glasgow editors disagreeing, some moment of angry confusion betrayed a box of MSS., by which the late Sir Alexander Boswell of Auchinleck was revealed as the writer of certain truculent enough pasquinades. A leading Edinburgh Whig, who had been pilloried in one or more of these, challenged Boswell — and the Baronet fell in as miserable a quarrel as ever cost the blood of a high-spirited gentleman.

This tragedy occurred in the early part of 1822; and soon afterwards followed those debates on the whole business in the House of Commons, for which, if any reader feels curiosity about them, I refer him to the Parliamentary Histories of the time. A single extract from one of Scott's letters to a member of

the then Government in London will be sufficient for my purpose; and abundantly confirm what I have said as to his personal part in the affairs of the Beacon.

" *To J. W. Croker, Esq., Admiralty.*

" My Dear Croker,

" . . . . I had the fate of Cassandra in the Beacon matter from beginning to end. I endeavoured in vain to impress on them the necessity of of having an editor who was really up to the business, and could mix spirit with discretion — one of those " gentlemen of the press," who understand the exact lengths to which they can go in their vocation. Then I wished them, in place of that *Bond*, to have each thrown down his hundred pounds, and never enquired more about it — and lastly, I exclaimed against the Crown Counsel being at all concerned. In the two first remonstrances I was not listened to — in the last I thought myself successful, and it was not till long afterwards that I heard they had actually subscribed the Bond. Then the hasty renunciation of the thing, as if we had been doing something very atrocious, put me mad altogether. The younger brethren too, allege that they are put into the front of the fight, and deserted on the first pinch; and on my word I cannot say the accusation is altogether false, though I have been doing my best

to mediate betwixt the parties, and keep the peace if possible. The fact is, it is a blasted business, and will continue long to have bad consequences.—Yours in all love and kindness, WALTER SCOTT."

END OF VOL. VI.

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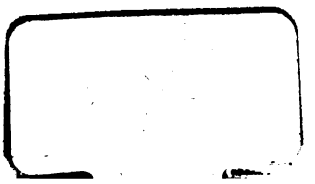
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